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LECTURES ON ECCLESIASTES

DELIVERED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

BY THE VERY REV.

GEORGE GRANVILLE BRADLEY, D.D.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

Orford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1885

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LECTURES ON JOB

BRADLEY

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London
HENRY FROWDE



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS WAREHOUSE
AMEN CORNER, E.C.

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TO HER
WHOSE CONSTANT SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT
HAVE LIGHTENED EVERY EFFORT
TO MEET LIFE'S HEAVY DUTIES
WITH FAITH, INDUSTRY, AND CHEERFULNESS,
THESE PAGES,
IN WHICH SHE TOOK SO PROFOUND AN INTEREST,
ARE DEDICATED BY
HER HUSBAND.

PRÉFACE.

THE following pages are intended to form a companion volume to the Lectures on Ecclesiastes published by the Clarendon Press two years ago. They contain two courses, each of six Lectures, on the Book of Job, which were given in Westminster Abbey in the closing weeks of 1885 and in the February and March of the following year.

As regards their general object and design, I may be allowed to repeat what was said in the prefatory notice to the former volume. I may once more disclaim any pretension to have enlarged by independent researches of my own, whether linguistic or historical, the field of knowledge open to the theological student, properly so called, of this portion of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In preparing these Lectures for delivery, and in very carefully revising them for publication, I have steadily kept before me a humbler, yet, in some senses, not, I trust, a less useful aim. Nothing has impressed me more forcibly since I entered on the multifarious duties of my present post, than the large number of men and women, of men especially of all ranks and ages, who are ready on week-day afternoons to form a singularly attentive, interested, and interesting audience to any one who with adequate knowledge and power of expression will attempt to put before them the result of a careful study of any portion of the Old or the New Testament.

I am speaking, I feel sure, the sentiments of others who have tried the experiment, of the Bishop of Sydney, of Archdeacon Farrar, and of Dr. Westcott, in saying that there is something exceedingly impressive and encouraging in addressing such a congregation on such subjects in such a place. The vast majority of those present are, of course, entire strangers to the speaker; they vary also in some degree from week to week; yet a large proportion, some, we have reason to believe, coming from a considerable distance, attend with unfailing regularity; their faces, as seen from the pulpit, become familiar to the speaker; they remind him that he has before him sympathetic and interested listeners, many of them fully alive to all the inspiring associations of the place in which they meet; occasional letters contain at times a question, or a suggestion; but for the most part we feel and must feel that we are addressing those of whose mode of life, education, opinions, amount of knowledge, we know absolutely nothing. Yet we feel at the same time that they must represent a far larger number, who, immersed in the calls and duties of active life, and with scanty opportunities for prolonged or methodical study, are thankful to receive some passing help and guidance towards a clearer comprehension of the contents of one or another portion of the Volume which Jerome spoke of as a 'Divine Library,' and which Edmund Burke described as 'a most venerable, but most multifarious, collection of the records of the divine economy, . . . carried through different books, by different authors, at different ages, for different ends and purposes¹.'

¹ Burke's Works, Vol. x, Speech on the Acts of Uniformity.

It is to meet the requirements of such a class that, encouraged by the reception given to a similar work on a Book so far less generally attractive and interesting than my present subject, I have ventured to print and publish, with some amount of necessary revision, the following series of Lectures.

It is possible that a few further words of preface, even though perhaps unduly personal, may be of interest to some who may care to pursue the study of the Book of Job. My own study of that Book dates from the year 1853, in which I was deeply impressed by a striking paper¹ which appeared in the *Westminster Review* from the pen of Mr. J. A. Froude. I can still recall the interest and enthusiasm with which I devoted whatever scanty leisure was at my disposal from the engrossing work of a master at Rugby to the attempt to form an opinion of my own on a subject which Mr. Froude had treated with such fire and eloquence, even if from a point of view that was to myself and others new and startling. I can recall the profound disappointment and vexation with which I turned from one after another of the 'standard' English Commentators, the keen interest with which, in spite of a very imperfect acquaintance with German, I toiled through Ewald's Introduction, and welcomed the aid of an article² by the late Professor Mozley in the *Christian Remembrancer*, brought to my notice by my friend and colleague, the late Principal Shairp. I even went so far as to venture to give two or three lectures, if such a name

¹ Republished in 'Short Studies on Great Subjects.'

² Republished in Mozley's Essays, Vol. ii.

may be given to very informal addresses, on the Book to my pupils on Sunday evenings. On one of these Sundays, my dear friend Arthur Stanley, then Canon of Canterbury, happened to be my visitor. We had much discussion on the subject of the book. I remember how even then, as in a sermon preached towards the end of his life in America, he upheld the claims of Elihu to a more respectful consideration than was generally awarded to him; and he told me soon after that he had written one if not two sermons on the subject of our conversations, in the study of which he encouraged me to persevere. From that time to this my interest in the book has never ceased, and I found myself at the close of my first year at Westminster in possession of a mass of MS. notes drawn from very different sources, English, French, and German, including, besides such writers as Ewald, Dillman, and Renan, various papers in Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopædias, the Speaker's Commentary, and a valuable and suggestive Volume by Dr. Samuel Cox. Armed with these notes, I ventured in the winter of 1882 at exceedingly short notice to give an experimental course of lectures, far too hastily prepared, in the Abbey. I was much impressed, I may say startled, by the interest, far beyond their merits or my own expectations, with which they were received. It is to this course that reference is made in the opening Lecture on Ecclesiastes. But I felt at once that such a book as that of Job demanded fuller treatment, more methodical preparation, and more deliberate and calmer study, than I had been able to command in a year filled to the full with other cares and duties. I accordingly returned to my old

studies, re-read my old authorities, added to them others, such as all that I could find of Reuss in French or German, an admirable little volume by Professor A. B. Davidson, and the interesting pages of Godet in his *Etudes Bibliques*. I also gained much from certain portions of Dr. Cheyne's two volumes on the Prophet Isaiah, and above all from Dr. Delitzsch's well-known Commentary on Job. I may add that I studied with profound interest the *Magna Moralia* of Gregory the Great, to which such frequent reference is made in the following pages. I was greatly encouraged also by the appearance of the new translation of Job in the Revised Version, of the importance of which I have spoken, not I think with undue emphasis, in the first Lecture, as having for the first time made this great Book intelligible from first to last to ordinary English readers. Whatever may be the merits, whatever the defects, of other portions of the work achieved by our Revisers, it is not too much to say that by their translation of Job they have earned the gratitude of all who speak our language. For they have thrown wide the doors of every chamber of a treasure-house, the greater part of which had hitherto been open only to the few.

The Lectures, written mostly during the autumn of 1885, were delivered at the dates already named, and the reception which they met encouraged me to look forward to prepare them for the press. Various causes, however, delayed their publication. Among others I ventured, after some sheets had been already printed, to apply to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press at Oxford and the Syndics of the University Press at Cambridge for permission to print the Revised Version as in

the present volume¹. Kind and prompt as was the answer which I received from both these learned bodies, yet the consequent alteration in the plan of the volume necessarily involved a further delay.

It was during this interval, and long after the MS. had left my hands, that I received from Dr. Cheyne a welcome copy of his important and instructive volume on 'Job and Solomon.' I must not attempt here to do more than express my grateful sense of the light which the labours of one so far more competent than myself to speak with authority on such a subject have thrown upon the Book with which I have attempted to deal in the following Lectures. I rejoice to feel that, though he speaks, as he has a right to speak, with far less doubt and hesitation, on such questions as the date and other points connected with the literary history of Job than I have felt and expressed myself, yet that in my general treatment of the Book as a whole, and of its different sections, I may claim to find myself in substantial agreement with one so much more qualified than myself to pronounce an opinion. Whether I should have delivered these lectures, if the public had had access to his volume a few years earlier, I can hardly say. Had I done so, its appearance would have saved me an amount of laborious, though interesting study, which I can hardly estimate. Yet it is more than probable that, valuable as his aid would have been, I might still have felt that there was room for the work which I have attempted.

¹ *The Revised Version of the chapters commented on has been inserted before each Lecture by permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.*

For the aim of these Lectures was, let me say it once more, not to add another to the learned and original works which have been written within the last half-century on the Book of Job. It was something wholly different. My object was to assist the reader of ordinary cultivation and intelligence, but of little leisure for independent study, and unversed in theological literature, English, German, or Patristic, to take up the Book and read it continuously with such guidance as would enable him to comprehend the drift and meaning, if not of every phrase, or of every line, yet at least of every successive portion and chapter. I have attempted also to keep steadily before those whom I address, even at the cost of some perhaps needless iteration, the real purpose of the book, the great and universal problems with which it deals, and the manner in which they are treated. The class for whom the Lectures were designed is so numerous and so varied, the subjects with which the successive chapters are concerned are of such enduring and profound importance, and the contents of the book, of at least its largest portion, of such matchless majesty and enthralling interest, that I still venture to hope that there will be many who will extend to the present volume the same kindly welcome which they gave to that on Ecclesiastes.

Let me once more express my deep obligation to the writers whom I have already named, and to many others from whom I have learned much. Let me add my thanks to the authorities at either University who have enabled me, as already mentioned, to preface each lecture with a reprint of the Revised Version of the Chapters with which it deals.

And, lastly, let me thank those personally unknown to myself, the Saturday afternoon congregations in Westminster Abbey, whose patient and sustained interest in the Lectures when delivered has emboldened me to address through these pages another and a wider audience.

DEANERY, WESTMINSTER,

July 30, 1887.

* * I may add that I have thought it best to adhere to the order in which the Lectures were delivered. But the reader may be reminded that Lecture VII, the first of the second series, is almost entirely introductory, and may well be read immediately after, and in close connection with, Lecture I.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

I DO not feel that any apology is needed for undertaking for a second time to speak from this place on the subject which I propose to bring before you to-day, and in the few following weeks. Let me say at once that I have no intention of merely repeating what I said on the same subject three years ago. It is not only that it would be strange if much additional reading and reflection had brought to myself no fuller mastery of the questions that will come before us. But it is mainly on other grounds that I have felt encouraged to invite those whom I see around me, to renew a study to which I have myself returned with, to say the very least, an unabated interest.

LECTURE

I.

The year is drawing to its close amidst the clamour and tumult of political strife, amidst high hopes and gloomy anticipations¹. For good or for evil—let us all earnestly pray that it may be for good—it will be a memorable year in the history of the land which is dear to all who meet beneath this historic roof. Yet let us not forget that its earlier months were marked by an event, the results of which may be bearing fruit when the memory of our present divisions and conflicts shall have faded from men's minds. It was, I need hardly remind you, in the spring of this same year that the Revised Version of the books of the Old Testament was placed in the

¹ The lecture was delivered shortly before the General Election held at the close of 1885.

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hands of all who speak our language. Some time must pass before the importance of this event can be fully realised. But it is hardly too much to say that it has brought for the first time within the reach of the ordinary reader the possibility of a really continuous and intelligent reading of some portions of the Old Testament Scriptures. Let me take for a single and well marked instance the book on which I am to speak to you. Three years ago I could not, and I did not, venture to invite the most interested of those who cheered me by their sympathetic attention in this place, to read through the book of Job, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. I knew that when they had passed beyond its opening pages, the language of which is, with few exceptions, perfectly simple and intelligible, they would, at first occasionally, and still more frequently as they advanced into the heart of the poem, be brought to a standstill by passages which could convey to them either no meaning of any kind, or one quite different from that of the original text. It is of course easy to miss a verse here, or to pass over a line there. In reading any version of a work of such extreme antiquity the reasonable reader will be prepared to meet with occasional or even frequent difficulties. But in the older version of the book of Job, these patches of obscurity and darkness, these quagmires, if I may vary my metaphor, of unintelligible speech, come so often as to do more than interrupt, to break up again and again, the whole thread and argument of the speaker's words. There is hardly a chapter of this great Dialogue in which they do not do much to destroy the force, as well as the beauty and pathos, of passages which can now be read with some approach to a full appreciation alike of their meaning in themselves, and of their place in the teaching of the book.

It would be interesting, if it would not detain us too long, to say a word even now as to the causes which have placed modern translators on a vantage-ground denied to those to whom we owe the untold debt of our authorised translation¹. It would be instructive also to read to you some of the renderings of that older version, absolutely unmeaning in themselves, and throwing darkness instead of light on the verses that come before and after, side by side with the form in which they have appeared in the present year. You would see at once that those to whom I speak stand in quite a different position from an ordinary, or indeed from an unusually instructed congregation of any previous period. It is not too much to say, that the reader of to-day has in the book of Job no longer a collection of moving and magnificent passages, broken by shorter or longer intervals of unconnected and inarticulate utterances, but a series of chapters, the main argument of which is, with of course occasional obscurities, clear, systematic, and intelligible. Such a change must materially affect the attitude of one who wishes to assist those, who with little leisure for close study, yet desire to enter into the full meaning and instruction of such a book as this. He will feel less like the guide who has to point out the features of a fair landscape, while, on this side and on that, point after point is wrapped in impenetrable mist. May one, who for thirty years has been a constant reader of the great Book which we have met to study, tender his thanks to those, who have discharged their momentous task, if without reaching a perfection which we had no right to demand or expect, yet with a skill, a courage, and a faithfulness, which deserve all honour and all gratitude?

¹ See below, Lecture VII.

LECTURE

I.
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Let me now proceed to call your attention more directly to the actual subject which I propose to bring before you on these winter afternoons. We who meet here shall leave behind us for a while, as we pass within these walls, the special cares and distractions of a time of excitement and discord. We shall open our ears to accents that will reach us across an unknown series of centuries, out of the darkness of a period whose date no man can fix with any approach to certainty. The voice to which we shall listen will come to us from a home which has been sought, now beneath the Pyramids of Egypt, now under the tents of Jethro or even of Laban, now beneath the shadow of the palace of Solomon, now in the abode of some wandering exile, by the banks of the Nile or among Arabian plains, now by the waters of Babylon, or amidst the humble roofs that rose out of the ruins of Jerusalem. The language in which it addresses us will be steeped in the imagery of a patriarchal age. He who speaks to us is, no doubt, a Hebrew; a Hebrew who knew, and, in the few verses in which he will speak in his own person, names his God by the sacred name, the name of names, by and in which He was revealed to the covenant people of Jehovah. But we shall look in vain in these pages for any reference to the history, or to the laws, or to the leaders, or to the institutions, of that chosen race, that received its Law amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai, and ran its marvellous career of national life on the soil of Palestine. To reach the time and scenery, we dare not say in which the unknown Author lived, but at all events to which he seems to summon us, we must pass back beyond the cradle of Roman greatness and of Greek genius; back through the whole series of God's dealings with the sons of Israel; we must plant our feet outside the furthest limits

of the Holy Land; among men and races who worship indeed the one God and Ruler of the universe; but who know nothing of the distinction between Jew and Gentile; nothing of the heroic age of Joshua or of Gideon; nothing of the glories of David or of the greatness of Solomon, nothing of the walls of Zion, or the temple of Jerusalem. We shall breathe at every breath we draw the free air of the early world, dashed indeed with occasional sounds and scents of a later age, but in the main the fresh air of a Patriarchal life, of the land of the fathers and chieftains of the 'children of the East.' The men with whom we shall be brought into contact will be the sons of a race with a civilisation and culture and conquests of its own; but still familiar with the eagle and rock-goat, the lion, the primeval ox and the wild ass; treading the illimitable plains of Asia, with the dew of the morning still upon its forehead, and the curtain yet unraised upon the long centuries that form what we call History. Yet strange to say, nowhere in the whole course of human literature, sacred or profane, shall we find the inexorable problems of life's painful riddles more keenly realised, more urgently pressed home, more freshly pictured, and, last not least, more tenderly listened to by a divine Teacher. Nor is this all. At every page that we shall turn, from the first to the last, we shall feel that if we are transported to another age, other manners, and a far-off land, we are still among our kindred and our brothers. The men who will speak to us will be men with the same joys, the same affections, the same difficulties, the same failings; they will be children of the same God, exposed to the same temptations, vexed by the same doubts, the same fears, and upheld, if not by the same hopes, yet by much at least of the same faith and the same guidance. The book whose pages we shall

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I.

turn is a gift, not to one age, or to one race, but to mankind.

What then, let us ask at once, is the form and structure, what the main subject and aim of this mysterious book? Let me first say, that owing to various causes it has been, till what we may fairly call a quite recent period, at once the most familiar and the least known of all the books of the Old Testament. The name of Job, with some portion of the story recorded in the book that bears his name, has been a household possession of mankind for centuries. Proverb after proverb has grown out of that story. It is not in our own tongue only that the 'patience of Job,' the 'poverty of Job,' the 'comforters of Job,' have become familiar phrases. The image of the Patriarch seated amidst his ashes, with a saintly glory round his head, has adorned alike the walls of cottages and the storied windows of stately churches¹. Passages of matchless beauty, or pathos, or majesty, have passed into the poetry of many languages. Words from our own older version breathe the hope and comfort which Christians welcome as they follow their departed dear ones to their graves. Yet in spite of this, it is not too much to say that the real contents, the essential teaching, of the book appear to have been almost lost for ages. Its fate has resembled that of some ancient picture, a portion of which still stands out bright and clear; the rest has been overlaid by layer after layer of the accumulation of generations, yet with the colours and original design still preserved, untouched and secure for the first age that should be content to seek for and recover them.

For it is not merely that the general, the almost universal,

¹ There is an interesting, but little known, series of windows, whose subject is the story of Job, in the Church of St. Patrice at Rouen.

impression as to the contents of the book, has been mainly based on or entirely coloured by the study, not of the book itself, but of its short introduction and shorter close, and is therefore necessarily exceedingly inadequate and misleading. It is more than this. The idea of the character of Job conveyed by that popular and traditional impression is one not inadequate only, but almost the very opposite of that which we shall find set before us, from the moment that we open the chapters that follow the short and touching narrative with which we are so familiar. As we read these later and central chapters, we shall find that we have before us one who, if he had bowed with entire submission to the greatest of losses, and the sharpest of sufferings, yet could lay aside the attitude of the patient sufferer, to assume that of the indignant and restless questioner. It is hardly too much to say, that the most striking feature in the pages that we shall study will be, not the patience, but the impatience—not the submission, but the uprising, almost the rebellion—of him whom from age to age men of all classes, not those only who have given shape to the superficial impressions of the untaught, but Fathers of the Church, great divines, great teachers, have agreed in calling the Patriarch of Patience. We shall watch, no doubt, his tender and dutiful resignation; but we shall listen no less to his bitter cries, his feverish questioning, to his challenges to his Maker, to his agony of despair. We shall see also something more than this. We shall see how and where he found at last peace and calm and quiet. We shall restore to him the name of ‘Patient’ which for a time we shall have denied him. But we shall understand by the ‘patience of Job,’ no longer the mere sweet submissiveness which we have hitherto connected with his name. We shall see in the word something

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more, something other, than that which we have hitherto understood by it. And we shall recognise in the Patriarch another Job than the Job of our traditions. He will be to us a greater Job, more sorely tried, more widely taught ; but he will be another than he was.

The language which I have used may startle some among you. Let me lose no time in bringing you face to face with the book itself.

It forms, as you will see, one of a group of five books which hold a place in our own version between what we are accustomed to call the Historical and the Prophetical books of the Old Testament. Those of you who will turn to the Revised Version will see also that, with the exception of two or three opening pages and of the last eleven verses, it resembles the books which immediately follow, and differs from those which come before it, in being printed and arranged throughout as poetry. It has a short Introduction and a short Conclusion, each written in prose ; and the different speakers are introduced in turn by a few words of prose. But all the rest is poetry. As the book of Psalms, that follows it in our Bibles, is a collection of lyric, or *hymnic* poems, by various authors and of various ages, from the time of David, to whom it owes its title, onwards, so the main portion of the book of Job forms one single and continuous poem. It is as such that we shall study it, as a sacred poem, whose true and divine teaching you will feel, I trust, as you have never felt it yet, but whose main teaching is put before us in the form of poetry. And the recognition of this fact may help to remind you that that great gift of Poetry, which has cast its spell over the human soul in every known stage of its progress, holds its place among the appointed means for the divine

education of our race. The Poets, whose dust or whose monuments are so near us to-day, are and have been, for good or evil, in all lands and in all ages, the preachers to mankind ; in no small measure their moral and spiritual guides and rulers.

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I.
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Need I say a word to remind you of the form in which Hebrew poetry, the poetry of the Old Testament, clothes itself? It is based, as many of you are aware, not, as is the versification of modern languages, on the number or accentuation of syllables, or on terminal rhymes ; nor, as the poetry of Greece and Rome, on the *quantity*, as we technically name it, the relative time, that is, required for the pronunciation of, successive syllables. Its characteristic feature is a certain *parallelism* of expression and thought, a rhyme of sentiment rather than of sound. It is thrown into the form most commonly of couplets, or combinations of two lines, each expressing the same thought under a different aspect. Thus:

*There the wicked cease from troubling ;
And the weary be at rest. (iii. 17.)*

Or, *There is a path which no fowl knoweth ;
And which the vulture's eye hath not seen. (xxviii. 7.)*

Or, *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble ?
Was not my soul grieved for the needy ? (xxx. 25.)*

We have occasionally triplets, verses of three lines, e. g.

*Let that day be darkness ;
Let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine on it. (iii. 4.)*

I need not detain you longer on the subject ; but it is well to avoid mere vague phrases, or terms to which no definite

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sense can be attached. You have but to open a copy of the Revised Version, and the main distinction between the prose and poetry of the Old Testament, and the nature of the double-lined verse, which forms the principal feature of the latter, will readily become plain to you.

The book of Job then, to the study of which you are now invited, is in its main portion a Poem, not a narrative or history. For this latter purpose the sacred writers invariably employed prose¹. It opens indeed and it closes with a short portion of narrative and therefore of prose, but the bulk of the book, nearly forty chapters out of forty-two, forms in the truest and highest yet simplest sense of the word a Poem, a sacred poem. Moreover it is the longest that has come down to us in all that varied collection of inspired literature to which we give the common name of the Bible. But it is as truly and as certainly a poem as the *Paradise Lost* or the *Iliad* are poems of England or of Greece.

And now, if you have so far followed me, a question may naturally arise; to what class of poetry does this Poem which we are to read belong? The question has been often asked, and very variously answered. We see at once that, though we may find imbedded in it, so to speak, passages that might well find a home in the Book of Psalms or of Proverbs, yet that it differs from either. It is not like the former, a series of detached hymns, embodying the very highest meditative outpourings, glad or sorrowful, of the human heart, national or individual, to its God. Nor do we find in its pages the common-sense of the many, framed in verse by the wisdom of one or more, as in so large a portion of the latter. It is as different

¹ Such retrospective poems of thanksgiving or humiliation as Psalms cv. and cvi. can hardly be looked on as exceptions.

as possible from the poetry, idyllic or mystic, of the Song of Solomon; or from the meditations on life, placed on the borderland of prose and poetry, which some of us have studied in the book of Ecclesiastes. It resembles indeed the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, as dealing with the practical and the speculative interests of human life. But it differs in other respects fundamentally from both. First, it gathers all its teaching round a single personage, the hero of the poem, who from the beginning to the end forms the one centre of interest. And secondly, whatever problems it raises, or whatever lessons it teaches, come to us, when once we have read the first line of the actual Poem, through the lips, never of the author himself, but of the speakers, human or divine or other, whom he places on the stage. Whoever was the unknown author of the book, he confines himself to placing before us the persons who are to speak to us, and to indicating something, where necessary, of their circumstances and characters.

And hence, according as they have fixed their eye on the first or the second of these considerations, men have named it, now an Epic Poem, now a Drama. Like Epic Poems, it has a hero, a struggle, and a conquest. The hero, who, like a Ulysses or an Æneas, gives his name to the Hebrew poem, is Job, an Arab Patriarch, a Gentile, of a kindred and yet different family to that of Israel, whose name and story had perhaps floated down from some distant age and formed part of the traditions of the Hebrew race. And round this one figure, and his conflict with a few friends who are grouped by his side, and with the stormy and bewildering thoughts and feelings that stir within his own breast, the whole interest of the Poem, properly so called, is concentrated and gathered up. No city is besieged or taken, no battles are won,

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I.



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I.

no ocean traversed, no nation founded, no adventures recorded. The scene of the long conflict, which is the theme of the poem, is a few square feet on the dried heaps of refuse that may still be seen outside the limits of an Arab village. The triumph toiled for, and at last secured, is over the teaching of his friends and his own torturing thoughts. If then it is an Epic, it is one of the 'inner life'; and it can only claim the name inasmuch as it represents, in the sublimest and most striking of forms, a struggle and a triumph, in which men of every age and every nation may claim an enduring interest. For the issues of that strife are even now of deeper import to the soul of man than the arbitrament of war, or the strife of parties, or the result of revolutions. And the cause which is at stake is one that extends far beyond the limits of the human race, or even of the visible order of creation. It reaches to the very heaven of heavens; for it includes in its range the nature and character of the Creator of mankind, and of the author and upholder of the 'universal frame' of Nature.

Many, on the other hand, who would refuse to accept the book as a Hebrew Epic, will speak of it without hesitation under the title of a sacred Drama. It is doubtless so far like a drama, that it consists almost entirely of dialogue; and that the author, as I reminded you just now, will speak to us, in the poem itself, only to introduce the different speakers to whose words we shall listen. Yet we cannot without reserve call that a drama in which there is no change of scene, no movement, no event, no action. For the action is, in the usual sense of the word, no action at all; it is only the torture and the agony, and the swayings to and fro, the doubts, the questionings and the faith, of one single human soul, stretched

on a rack of misery, and facing sharper pains than those which the worst sickness or the worst poverty can bring. And if this is the extent of the action, as it is called, of the poem, what is the catastrophe, what the closing scene? It is simply the coming face to face of that soul with its God, and the clearing away of the clouds that had hidden from it a Father's face. All that there is of progress or of movement, other than internal and spiritual, is conveyed, not in the Drama itself, but in the Prologue and the Epilogue, if we may use the terms, which are attached to it, and which, however lifelike the picture they convey, and however essential each may be to the right understanding of the poem, stand outside its limits.

It has been called also a Parable; and there is a sense, no doubt, in which the word, however vaguely and loosely used, may well be applied to it. Like so many parables of the Great Teacher, it is set before us without any direct comment or explanation from him, the unnamed author, who, in an unknown age, was inspired to leave it as an eternal possession for the study of mankind. It stands quite apart from the didactic poem, or philosophic dialogue, in which all points, and all leads up, to some one single and clearly expressed lesson, which is enforced and held forth as its conclusion and issue. We are left to draw from it our own lessons, our own teaching: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

I will make then no further attempt to bring the book, the Poem, which we are to study, under any special class or denomination. It stands alone in the Bible, alone in the literature of the world, as the very flower of inspired Hebrew Poetry; and as such let us accept it, seeking for its true teaching and its true import in its contents, and in these only.

LECTURE

I.



LECTURE

I.
—♦—

And in order to do this, we will try and acquaint ourselves with this teaching and these contents, as we find them in the book itself. And we will look there, not for the Job of popular tradition, or of Art, nor we may even say for the Job of great teachers and writers, who have written into verse after verse their own thoughts, their own feelings, or, oftener still, the controversies, the doctrines, and the history of their own day. We will look for the Job of Holy Scripture, the Job as he stands before us in the Poem that bears his name. And it is strange how vast we shall find the difference between the picture displayed to us on these sacred pages and that which we have had placed before us, or perhaps formed in our own minds before turning to the record which those pages offer us. The book will speak for itself and unfold its own story. It is one of such intense and eternal interest, that I venture to hope that some of you, as you read it with such hints as a few words from this place, the result of much patient and attentive study, can give you, will feel a new field of thought opened to you in connection with those Scriptures of the Old Testament, a fresh access to which has been placed before you in the year which is drawing to its close. You will find that room is made in that sacred Record, not only for lessons of sweet and gentle submission to the most terrible of afflictions, but also for the cries to God under pain and suffering, which still go up from beds of torture, and long hours of misery. You will find that room is made also for doubts, misgivings, and questionings, which you may have felt stirring deep down in the secrecy of your own souls, but the dwelling for a moment on which you have supposed to be confined to those whom we call sceptics, infidels, atheists, or in our milder moods rationalists and neologians; or else to professedly anti-christian writers

and speakers; or even to the enemies of all existing faiths and of the whole framework of social order. And you will find that he who puts forward so vehemently, and feels so keenly, the very selfsame difficulties and problems which have perhaps vexed you, is no enemy of the faith once delivered to God's people, but a Patriarch dear to God and honoured in all the churches. And you will find also that he who gives utterance to these questionings was condemned and rebuked by good men who listened to his words, and who tried vainly to win him to recall what he had said, and to recant his errors. But He whom he seemed at one time almost to blaspheme, looked on his doubts and cries and agonies 'with larger other eyes' than the human advisers and consolers who stood around him. He gives him, we shall find, no full solution, no key to all that perplexed him, and perplexes us, in the destiny of man, or in the history of the universe. But not the less for that does He draw near to His suffering child, and reveal something of Himself, and make him feel that through all his pains and all his sorrows, and all his errors and perplexities, he had still been dear to Him; and that to cleave to truth, and to love justice and righteousness, was better than blindly to uphold, as his friends had done, the imperfect creed and inadequate interpretation of God's laws which he found around him, or to 'justify the ways of God to man' at the expense of charity and truth; or in defiance of a growing light dawning on the people of God, and of the voice, the sacred voice, that spoke to him in his own conscience.

Many more lessons we shall learn as we read its pages. For to us too the book will be, in the truest sense of the word, that which a learned Jew once called it, a Parable. We

LECTURE

I.
—♦♦—

shall find in it the highest and most needed of all teaching, conveyed in the form of the story of a Patriarchal life, and of a dialogue, sustained on both sides with an awful earnestness, between men who wear the garb, and use the imagery of Arab Chiefs. It will speak to us through persons and through modes of thought, as far removed from all around us as the East is from the West, as that far-off age from this our modern life. But we may gather from it lessons not only of calmness and submission, but of a wide and wise sympathy which may enlarge our hearts and open our understandings. We shall find in it lessons of confidence and trust in a love that lies behind the darkest clouds that close around our lives, or around our faith; a faith dearer, it may be, to us than life itself. We shall find in it lessons too of humility; warnings of our own limited and imperfect vision. We shall be reminded of our short-sightedness and ignorance; of our incapacity to apprehend and map out things and laws and dispensations of which we sometimes speak with a presumptuous readiness; but we may gather lessons, above all, of repose and calm and hope, of confidence in the law of righteousness and in the law of love.

And having said so much to-day, I must detain you no further. I would gladly have devoted another afternoon, first, to putting before you a careful sketch of the actual contents of the book, next, to saying something of what we might call its literary history; the different views, that is, that have been held of its authorship, its age, and even of its interpretation, typical, historical, devotional. These are questions on which I could, I am sure, command your attention. But to judge by my own experience, I incline to think that a few words on one or other of these points will be more interesting to those

who have penetrated some way into the atmosphere of the book itself, than to those who are merely preparing to do so¹.

LECTURE
I.

And therefore, in the short course of lectures to which you are at present invited, I think it may be best to ask you to begin at once, when next we meet, with some study of its opening pages; of those first two chapters of stately prose, which have impressed themselves on the memory and the language of every nation to which their short and tragic story has found a way. They will not lose their hold on the interest of mankind, as long as tears are shed and hearts are broken. May we read their simple teaching aright and wisely.

¹ See below, Lecture VII.

Nov. 13, 1885.

LECTURE II.

CHAPTERS I, II. The Prologue.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. I, II.)

- 1 THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was ¹Job ; CHAPTER
and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, II.
2 and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons —♦—
3 and three daughters. His ²substance also was seven thousand ¹Heb. *Iyob*.
sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of ²Or, *cattle*
oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household ;
so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east.
4 And his sons went and held a feast in the house of each
one upon his day ; and they sent and called for their three
5 sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the
days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sancti-
fied them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt
offerings according to the number of them all : for Job said, It
may be that my sons have sinned, and ³renounced God in their ³Or, *blas-*
hearts. Thus did Job continually. *phemed*
6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present
themselves before the LORD, and ⁴Satan came also among them. ⁴So ver. 11,
ch. ii. 5, 9.
7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou ? Then ⁴That is,
the Adver-
Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in *sary*.
8 the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD
said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job ? ⁵for ⁵Or, *that*
there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright
9 man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil. Then Satan
answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought ?
10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house,
and about all that he hath, on every side ? thou hast blessed
the work of his hands, and his ⁶substance is increased in the ⁶Or, *cattle*
11 land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath,

CHAPTER II. and he will renounce thee to thy face. And the LORD said 12
unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy ¹power; only
—♦— upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth
¹ Heb. from the presence of the LORD.
hand.

And it fell on a day when his sons and his daughters were 13
eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, that 14
there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were
² Heb. plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and ²the Sabeans 15
Sheba. fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the
³ Heb. ³servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped
young men. alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also 16
another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and
hath burned up the sheep, and the ³servants, and consumed
them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was 17
yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans
⁴ Or, *made* made three bands, and ⁴fell upon the camels, and have taken
a raid. them away, yea, and slain the ³servants with the edge of the
sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he 18
was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons
and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their
eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind 19
⁵ Or, *over* ⁵from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house,
and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only
am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his 20
mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground,
and worshipped; and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's 21
womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and
the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.
In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with foolishness. 22

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present 2
themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them
to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto 2
Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the
LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from
walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, 3
⁶ Or, *that* Hast thou considered my servant Job? ⁶for there is none like
him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth

God, and escheweth evil : and he still holdeth fast his integrity, CHAPTER II.
 although thou movedst me against him, ¹to destroy him without
 4 cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, —♦—
 5 yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth ¹Heb. to
 thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will *swallow*
 6 renounce thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, *him up.*
 7 Behold, he is in thine hand ; only spare his life. So Satan
 went forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with
 8 sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he
 took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal ; and he sat
 9 among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still
 10 hold fast thine integrity ? renounce God, and die. But he said
 unto her, Thou speakest as one of the ²foolish women speaketh. ²Or,
 What ? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we *impious*
 not receive evil ? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.
 11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was
 come upon him, they came every one from his own place ;
 Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the
 Naamathite : and they made an appointment together to come
 12 to bemoan him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up
 their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice,
 and wept ; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled
 13 dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with
 him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none
 spake a word unto him : for they saw that his ³grief was very ³Or, *pain*
 great.

LECTURE II.

CHAPTERS¹ I, II. THE PROLOGUE.

I SPOKE to you last week, I fear at too great length, on the form in which the book of Job is cast. I spoke also on the misconceptions as to its contents and teaching, which have been so long and so widely prevalent. Let us turn at once from these and kindred questions to the book itself.

LECTURE
II.
—♦—
Chaps. i, ii.

We open our Bibles at the first verse of those two chapters which form, as I have already reminded you, the Introduction, or Prologue, to all that follows. They are written, as you will observe, in prose; and so far they stand apart from the long poem, the dramatic poem, if with due reservations we care so to name it, to which they point the way.

But this Introduction, or Prologue, though differing in form, as a glance at the Revised Version will shew you, from the chapters that follow, is not a Prologue in such a sense that we can conceive of it as detached from the Dialogue or Drama, to which it leads the way. It is not indeed, as it has been popularly treated, the main portion of the Book of Job. It is not a narrative, or history, to which nearly all that follows is merely a long appendix of secondary and subsidiary interest. But it is an essential and integral portion of the book. It gives the key to all that follows. The character of Job, as portrayed in what we shall read to-day, the successive trials of that character, as described in the scenes which will now pass before us, must be studied

¹ For the Revised Text of these chapters, see the pages immediately preceding this Lecture.

LECTURE

II.

—♦—
Chap. i.

with attention, and impressed on our memories, before we pass to the other scenes, with all that they involve of fresh thoughts and words and feelings, which we shall encounter as we proceed. But, this said, our work to-day will be simple. The obscurities of language, the darker problems, the seeming contradictions, the more difficult questions of the book, will meet us not here but further on. They will claim in due time our full attention; yet I have no fear of our finding, even in these familiar pages, any lack of interest or instruction. Let us turn to them at once.

ver. i.

The opening words, simple as they are, are suggestive of much. They mark a point in which the Book stands alone in our Old Testaments. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.* The scene you see opens—the curtain, so to speak, is raised—in the land of Uz. I need not detain you with a discussion as to its exact locality, still less as to any mystical meaning which can be attached to the word. It may have lain, as there is some reason to believe, eastward of the territory of Edom, in the high plains of what, in the widest sense, we may call the land of Arabia¹. But wherever Job's home is to be sought for, it lay beyond the confines of the Land of Israel. We pass therefore at the very threshold of the book into another region than that with which the Old Testament Scriptures have familiarised us. There are, no doubt, other portions of those Scriptures, such as the Proverbs, or certain of the Psalms, or Ecclesiastes, in which we shall look in vain for any local colouring to remind us of the scenery or associations of Palestine. But in this book, and

¹ See an interesting paper by J. G. Wetzstein in the Appendix to Delitzsch's Commentary.

in this alone, from the first line to the last, the atmosphere around us is not merely non-Jewish, but something definitely and distinctly different. We have before us what we may call the life of a Saint of the Old Testament; but it is that of a Gentile, not of a Jewish Saint. And thus in the very heart and centre of the sacred record of the Older Covenant we have enshrined the truth, which, on one eventful day, was to bring home to those who had been reared under that Covenant the message that its work was done, its mission accomplished; that *God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him.* Here then, in this wholly Gentile world, dwelt Job, the hero of the poem—epic or dramatic, call it which you will—that is to follow. And his portrait is drawn at once in two or three bold and clear strokes.

LECTURE
II.

Chap. i.

Acts x. 34,
35.

First, he is described, in words which we shall hear again, as one *perfect*,—sincere, i.e. and whole-hearted, not of course in any theological sense of sinlessness—*perfect* and *upright*; and again as *one that feared God and eschewed*, or avoided, *evil*. Nothing, you will see, is said of his wisdom. We shall hear his own definition of wisdom in due time; but it is as the Eastern Saint, rather than the Eastern Sage, that he is put before us. I call your attention at once to this; for this character of Job, thus painted in its four-fold aspect, this high and blameless character before God and man, is an essential element in the tragic story that is to come.

ver. 1.

His *goodness* then is the first element in that tragedy. And the second is his *prosperity*. And this prosperity is drawn in greater detail, with touch after touch of poetic and vivid colouring.

First, Job is rich in *sons and daughters*. He has *seven sons*, we are told—we are in the world, remember, of the East, where,

ver. 2.

LECTURE

II.

Chap. i.
ver. 3.

as in all earlier stages of the history of our race, sons are prized far above their sisters—*seven sons* and *three daughters*.

And secondly, he is rich in all the wealth of that early world ; rich in possessions which mark the stage, a transitional stage, to use modern language, of human progress in which the drama of his destiny is to be played. We find, at the very first, that mingling of the nomadic and the pastoral with the settled and agricultural, and even with city life, of which we shall find many traces further on. We have next the full catalogue of his wealth. It consists in *camels*, often man's only means, as African campaigns have taught us, of traversing the huge spaces of the thirsty desert ; in *asses*, for shorter journies ; in *sheep*, for the grassy plains and uplands ; and in *yokes of oxen*, for the plough. And the numbers given are all such as to represent a typical and ideal height of unexampled affluence. He is rich also, thirdly, in *a great household* ; in slaves, that is, if I may transfer to such a picture a word steeped in degrading associations. We shall see how, in almost his final words, he speaks of his bearing toward and treatment of these his dependants. We shall hear him speak as no Greek or Roman, as few modern slave-masters would have spoken, but as one who respected in his bondsman his brother¹ man, as one who, in the Apostle's words, *honoured all men*².

And his position is summed up last of all as that of *the greatest of all the Sons of the East*, the 'Beni-Kedem' ; a term often applied to those Arab races, kindred to, but not of the same family as, the seed of Jacob, that dwelt or wandered, then as now, between the Nile and the Euphrates.

And the story goes on next to tell us of the mutual entertainments and festivities of his children. It is a touch

¹ xxxi. 13-15.

² 1 Pet. ii. 17.

inserted, as is obvious, to bring out the idea, partly of affluence, but still more of family affection and endearment, as tending to deepen the impression alike of the happiness of the Patriarch and of the tragedy that follows. Each in turn, on each day, it would seem, of the week—the colouring is somewhat clearer in the Revised Version¹—each son would entertain in his own house his brothers and his sisters. And so the weeks go by. The greatest of the sons of the East has his family, an unbroken circle, settled around his home—whether a *tent* or *house* is not quite clear—in peace and well-being.

But the next touch that is added is intended to bring out afresh the other equally essential element in Job's long career of happiness; not his prosperity, but his blamelessness, his more than blamelessness, his warm-hearted affection, and his genuine piety. We have in him a character untainted by riches, unspoilt by success. When the full cycle of seven days, a number sacred in other Eastern nations than the Jewish, is complete, the father comes upon the scene. There is a momentary obscurity in the language; but there is nothing to mar the picture of fatherly love. At sun-rise on the eighth day, the first day of a fresh week, the father rises, and, as it would seem, with his children round him, and after some simple lustral², or purifying ceremony, offers in their behalf a sacrifice for each. As this Patriarchal head of a Gentile family stands by the altar-side, you see how far removed we are from the atmosphere of an Aaronic Priesthood and a Levitical ritual, of that sacerdotal system whose passing away before the coming of the Great High Priest is even now the

LECTURE

II.

Chap. i.
ver. 4.

ver. 5.

¹ *And his sons went and held a feast in the house of each one upon his day.*—R.V. See p. 23.

² *He sanctified them.*—v. 5.

LECTURE

II.

Chap. i.

ver. 5.

theme of our daily Second Lessons. The freer air of a larger than the Jewish world already breathes around us, and with the smoke of the offering goes up the father's prayer as he intercedes for each child in turn. *It may be*, he says, *that my sons have sinned and cursed*, or renounced, *God in their hearts*; uttered, i.e. some chance or secret words of sin and folly. *Thus*, we read, *did Job continually*. The form of worship, the language of the worshipper, may have been those of the region of Uz, of the day and the land of Job. But who can fail to see beneath these transitory circumstances the image of the Christian parent, the father or the mother, anxious for the unguarded hours of thoughtless youth, and pleading with the same God for present or for absent children?

ver. 6.

And now the scene shifts, and we are reminded that, though the narrative, like all other Hebrew narrative, wears the form of prose, yet we are reading what is after all the first book, so to speak, of a great and sacred Poem. We are transported from the plains of Uz to the halls of Heaven; and our thoughts may go for a moment from these sacred pages to the Milton or the Dante of another age. There, like an Oriental Sovereign, Jehovah holds His court.

'The Lord' is the translation given to His title both in the old and the new English version; but you will remember all that the word implies in the original, as answering to the sacred name represented in English by the word Jehovah. And it is worth while calling your attention once more¹ to the fact, that the writer, when speaking in his own person, uses the name by which God was revealed to Moses in the Bush, and to the chosen people; speaks, that is, of the most High as a Hebrew of the

¹ See above, p. 6.

Hebrews would speak. In this Prologue also, he places the same title in the mouth of Job. But elsewhere, with two noticeable exceptions¹, all the persons whom he brings before us will speak of God under titles current in patriarchal times, and common to other races who worshipped the one God. He is not to them the mysterious Jehovah, but *Eloah* (or *Elohim*), the usual term for God, as representing one supreme over the powers of nature, or else *El-Schaddai*, 'the Almighty.' Even in the name of his God he will soon remind us that the soil we tread is not the soil of Israel.

LECTURE

II.

Chap. i.

But to return to the narrative; before the throne of Jehovah are gathered *the Sons of God*. We meet the phrase elsewhere in the Old Testament², and we shall find it again in this book³, as used to designate beings of other than human mould, employed as God's ministers of mercy or of judgment, whose creation dates from a period older than that of the material earth and of us its inhabitants.

ver. 6.

And among these beings who come to do homage to their Lord, is one who bears the title of 'the Adversary,' or 'Opposer,' *the Satan*, as the word stands in the Hebrew, who reports himself as fresh from travelling to and fro on the surface of the earth. And Jehovah Himself calls his attention to one of whom He speaks as *my servant Job*, and bears His own testimony, a more than human testimony, to his goodness. He repeats, reminding some of us perhaps of similar repetitions in the oldest of classic poets, the very words in which the Author had introduced him: *Hast thou considered*, he says, *my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God,*

ver. 7.

ver. 8.

¹ xii. 9; xxviii. 28.

² Gen. vi. 2; Psalm lxxxix. 6.

³ xxxviii. 7.

LECTURE II. *and escheweth evil.* But 'the Adversary,' clearly a malignant spirit, has his answer ready. *Doth Job fear God,* he says, *for nought?* He insinuates at once a doubt, and more than a doubt, as to Job's motives. *Hast Thou not,* he goes on, *made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce Thee to Thy face.* 'I myself,' he seems to say, 'could be as pious as Job, were I as prosperous as he.' 'It is easy,' says a character drawn by a modern satirist, 'to be virtuous on a handsome income, on so many thousands a year.' The temptations of poverty are obvious, and strike the eye. Satan sees them at a glance. Those of wealth, that wrung from the Great Teacher the words, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God¹,' are more subtle and hidden. Satan read the one, Jesus Christ the other.

Let us look again at his language. He puts at once into words a view of human springs of action, not confined to a single age. *Doth Job fear God for nought?* 'There is no such thing,' he says, 'as disinterested goodness.' Such a question, such a view, is not confined to evil spirits, or to the story of the man of Uz. The question had been raised when this book was written. It is one of the main questions, some have said, the main question of all, with which this book is meant to deal. But the view embodied in Satan's words is one which you may have heard whispered, or loudly spoken, or taken for granted, now and here, as there and then. There is no such thing, you may be told, as a love of goodness for its own sake. There is always some ulterior aim, some selfish motive. Even religion, you will hear, even the

¹ Mark x. 23.

religion of Christ, is a mere matter of selfish interest. It is nothing more, even when sincere, than a selfish device to escape from pain, and enjoy happiness hereafter. *Doth Job serve God for nought?* You see how far the words extend. They cover a wider range than that of the character of one child of Adam. They go down to the very springs of human nature; down to the very essence and even the existence of goodness itself. 'Can men and women care for goodness and mercy, or for truth, or for righteousness, for their own sake?' Nay, the arrow launched at Job flies further: it is really pointed at God Himself. If Satan is right, it is not only that there is no such thing as disinterested goodness, but God Himself is robbed of His highest and noblest attribute. If He can no longer win the hearts, and retain in joy and sorrow the reverential affection of those on whom He showers His benefits; if He can no longer inspire anything but a mercenary love, He may be all-powerful still, but there are surely those among our fellow creatures, whom some of us know or have known, who must come before Him in our homage. Heaven and earth are no longer full of His glory. You see how vital the question which the challenge stirs, and how rightly it has been said, that in the coming contest, Job is the champion, not of his own character only, but of all who care for goodness, and of God Himself¹.

The challenge is given and is accepted; and power is granted to Satan to test the good man, the *perfect and upright* Job, with the loss of that on the possession of which the accuser believes all his goodness to be based.

Satan, you will notice, is not represented in this book as the suggester of evil to the human soul, nor as the

LECTURE

II.

—♦—
Chap. i.

ver. 12.

¹ See this point forcibly urged by Godet, *Études Bibliques*, p. 203.

LECTURE II.
 Chap. i. fallen Angel, his Maker's foe. He is depicted as simply a malicious spirit¹, whose power for evil is rigidly limited by his Master and the Master of the world. And such as he is, he goes forth to work his will. And once more the scene shifts to the land of Uz.

ver. 13. It is a high festival with the children of the unconscious Job. It is the day apparently on which the father offers his accustomed sacrifices; the day certainly on which the happy children gather round their eldest brother. Out of the clear sky comes the thunder. Blow falls on blow, falls with rapid
 ver. 14, 15. and tragic strokes four times repeated. First, a message comes that *Sabæans*, plundering Arabs, marauders from the South, have burst into his cultivated lands, carried off his oxen and his asses, and slain his servants. *I, I only*, says
 ver. 16. the bringer of the evil tidings, *am escaped to tell thee*. And in a moment, another tells of the destruction of his grazing flocks and shepherds by the *fire of God*, the terrible lightning.
 ver. 17. *And while he was yet speaking*, another, a sole survivor also, bursts in with the news that a still wilder tribe, the *Chaldeans*, or Chasdim, of the North, have made a foray from their highlands, and dividing their forces like skilled marauders into three bodies, have swept away his wealth of camels, and massacred their guardians.

All his wealth, three kinds of wealth, representing, as I reminded you just now, three stages in the growth of human society, is gone from him in a moment. And as seems sometimes to happen in real life, so in this typical picture of human calamity, sorrows come not singly, not as 'single spies' but 'in battalions'². The powers of man and the powers of nature smite him with alternate strokes. For as he listens to

¹ Cf. our Lord's words, St. Luke xxii. 31. ² Hamlet, Act iv. Sc. 5.

these tidings, worse follows. The wild wind from the wilderness, that howls across the great steppes of Asia, has buried his children, sons and daughters, in the ruins of the house or tent where they had met. All are gone. The happy father is left childless; the rich man is beggared. It is the dark close of some Greek tragedy, introduced with startling suddenness, into its opening scene.

LECTURE

II.

Chap. i.

ver. 18, 19.

And *Job arose*, we read. The news tore his heart. He made no attempt to stifle his grief, or bear his sorrow like a Stoic. There was no need to tell him, like the bereaved father in *Macbeth*, to 'give sorrow words.' He *rent his mantle and shaved his head*, like a true son of the East in overwhelming affliction. ver. 20.

But this was not all. His past life bore its fruits. Years of accumulated and genuine piety stood him in good stead in the moment of sudden, unlooked-for, trial. *He fell down*, we read, *on the ground and worshipped*. Of that scene in heaven, of those other than human eyes that watched his bearing, he knew nothing. But he resigned himself to the hand which afflicted him, in memorable words, which rise at once to the level and assume the form of poetry, words in which our Church frames the thoughts of Christian mourners.

Naked came I out of my mother's womb, And naked shall I return thither, to my mother Earth. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord. Blessed*, he says, *be the name of Jehovah. In all this*, adds the author, *Job sinned not, nor charged God with folly*, or 'wrong doing,' as the marginal version runs. ver. 21.

And thus the Evil One was foiled. Job's innocence and piety, and all that was involved in these, were vindicated, even at this terrible cost. ver. 22.

But the story is not complete; the trial is renewed. After an interval, whose length we know not, and need not ask,

LECTURE II. we have once more a vision of the Courts of Heaven. And
 Chap. ii. once more we see 'the Sons of God' presenting themselves
 ver. 1. before Jehovah. And as before, with a repetition of the same
 ver. 2, 3. words, which will again remind some of us of the simplicity
 of Homer, Satan is questioned whence he comes; gives his
 answer; and is called on to turn his eyes to the steadfastness
 of God's servant, who still, in spite of undeserved and unex-
 amplesd woes, *holds fast his integrity*. And Satan's answer
 ver. 4. is in the same spirit as before. *Skin for skin*, he says, *yea,*
all that a man hath will he give for his life. The phrase is
 not easily explained. Possibly it is such a proverb as this.
 'He will go on bartering, one thing against another, skin
 against skin, whatever is nearest him; he will submit to any
 bargain, to save his life.' And Satan challenges Him, who
 has suffered His servant to be so far tried and proved, to go
 ver. 5. one step farther. *Touch*, he says, his own person, *his bone*
and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. Once more
 ver. 6. the challenge is accepted: and the fiat goes forth. *Behold he*
is in thy hand, only spare his life. And the scene shifts
 rapidly, and we are brought back once more to Job. *From*
the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, he is attacked with
 the direst form of the sorest of Eastern diseases, the terrible
 leprosy, so often spoken of as the mark of divine punishment.
 Into all that is told us of it by Eastern travellers or medi-
 eval writers I need not enter. Centuries ago its horrors were
 familiar in Europe. They were not unknown in our own
 country, even near to these walls¹; horrors for which you may
 now search in vain the wards of an English hospital. Like

¹ On the site of St. James' Palace stood once a 'Hospital for leprous
 maids,' an almshouse, i. e. or retreat, for female lepers. See also an
 interesting chapter in De Malan's *Histoire de S. François d'Assise*.

death, this plague was at all times a great leveller. And now the 'greatest of the Sons of the East' cowers among the ashes and refuse, outside his home, loathsome alike to himself and others.

His cup seemed full. One other turn of the rack, so to speak, is yet possible. It is not spared him. From the one human quarter from which comfort might have yet come, there comes only a vulgar taunt, and suggestion of despair. '*Dost thou still,*' said his wife, who only comes on the scene to heighten for one moment the intensity of her husband's desolation and misery, '*dost thou still retain thine integrity, thy attitude of pious resignation towards God? Renounce, she says, God and die.* Leave the unprofitable service of this God, Who has left thee to so undeserved a fate. Leave Him, and quit life, a life that has nothing left worth living for.'

It seems hard indeed, hard above all to those who have known the blessings of an English and a Christian home, that such a sneer and such advice should come from such a quarter. It pains us, as with an unwelcome shock. Let me recall to you that when, just sixty years ago, the Poet-painter William Blake¹ drew some wonderfully powerful illustrations to the Book of Job, he, the English husband of a loyal and affectionate wife, refused to follow the course of the story in this terrible detail. All the rest he could portray, step by step. But here he stayed his hand, and those who can turn to his much prized drawings, will see Job's wife vindicated against the scorn of centuries, kneeling beside her husband, and sharing his patient misery. They will see her still by his side, through each and all of his future pangs and agonies,

LECTURE
II.

—♦♦—
Chap. ii.
ver. 8.

ver. 9.

¹ See *Illustrations of the Book of Job, invented and engraved by William Blake, 1825.*

LECTURE II. and restored with him to a common happiness in the closing scene. There was something in the record of Job's sufferings too keen and bitter, too remote, may we not thankfully say, from the experience of English and Christian married life, for that sensitive and gifted spirit, so often on the borderland where genius touches madness, to bear to reproduce.

Chap. ii.

ver. 10.

And it might well be so. *Curse God*, she said, *and die*. The depths of human misery seemed sounded. How many human souls might, in one way or another, have lent an ear to the suggestion. A Roman might have turned upon his unjust Gods and died by his own hand, like Cato, with words of defiance on his lips. Others might have sought the same fate in dull despair. Not so Job. *Thou speakest*, he says, *as one of the foolish* (i. e. as always, the ungodly) *women speaketh*. *What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* In all this, adds the writer, who speaks so rarely in his own person, *did not Job sin with his lips*; not one word of murmur escaped him. Satan is foiled, and reappears on the scene no more.

We have here then put before us the very highest and most perfect type of *patience* in the sense of simple *resignation*. It is the greatest picture ever drawn of that calm, unhesitating, and profound acquiescence in the will of God, which, to borrow the words of him¹ whom I always rejoice to quote from this place, was one of the 'qualities which marked Eastern religions, when to the West they were almost unknown, and which even now is more remarkably exhibited in Eastern nations than among ourselves.' Yes! 'Thy will be done' is 'a prayer which lies at the very root of all religion.' It stands among the foremost petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

¹ A. P. Stanley, Sermon preached at Boston U. S. A., 1878.

It is deeply engraven in the whole religious spirit of the Sons of Abraham, even of the race of Ishmael. In the words, 'God is great,' it expresses the best side of Mahommedanism, the profound submission to the will of a Heavenly Master. It is embodied in the very words, Moslem and Islam. And we, servants of the Crucified One, must feel that to be ready to leave all in God's hands, not merely because He is great, but because we know Him to be wise, and feel Him to be good, is of the very essence of religion in its very highest aspect. The great English Divine, Bishop Butler¹, has well said, that though such a passive virtue may have no field for exercise in a happier world, yet the frame of mind which it produces, and of which it is the fruit and sign, is the very frame of all others to fit man to be an active fellow worker with his God, in a larger sphere, and with other faculties.

LECTURE
II.
—♦—
Chap. ii.

And the very highest type of such submission we have set before us in Job. Poor as he now is, he is rich in trust and in nearness to his God; and Christian souls, trained in the teaching of Christian centuries, will feel that if there is a God and Father above us, it is better to have felt towards Him as he felt, than to have been the lord of many slaves and flocks and herds, and the possessor of unclouded happiness on a happy earth.

And there ends, so far as Job is concerned, the Introduction to the Poem which bears his name. It leaves him miserable, yet resigned; seated on his dung-heap. Had the story ended there, it might have remained in our memories as an overdrawn perhaps and excessive, yet not an absolutely impossible, type of what is sometimes seen in real life: trouble after trouble coming upon some human soul, and no relief

¹ *Analogy*, Part I, Chapter v.

LECTURE II.
 Chap. ii.
 ver. 11-13. granted on this side the grave. We might have turned from the picture ; yet it would have recurred to our minds once and again in the course of life's experience, as a sample of what is too possible, too conceivable, in this tangled world ; as something which after all might be 'an overtrue story,' the sad end of a saddened life.

ver. 11. But the story does not end here. We are only, as yet, within the porch. We have not yet entered the gallery of strange and unlooked for pictures which we are yet to tread ; and one more touch gives us the transition to all that is to follow. Three of Job's friends,—the name and abode of each is carefully given,—men, it would seem, like himself, no children of the seed of Jacob, but Arab Sheikhs or Emirs, as we might say, have heard of the calamities which have befallen their friend, and have come from far *to bemoan him and to comfort him*. It is a touch of human nature which we recognise at once. A touch, it might be added, of a sympathetic feeling that lay deep in the Hebrew heart ¹. But as they drew
 ver. 12. near and raised their eyes and saw the change which disease and misery had worked in his form and face, the horrors of the spectacle overcame them. *They lifted up their voices and wept*. Nor this only ; those Eastern chiefs *rent every one his mantle*, and threw dust towards Heaven, in sign of their agony of sympathy. And then they could find no words to
 ver. 13. comfort him. How could they ? They sat or crouched by him in silence, in the oriental ² attitude of grief, says the story, *seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him : for they saw that his grief was very great*.

If the imagery is of the East, Eastern, the sentiment that

¹ See Lectures on Ecclesiastes, p. 81.

² See Ezekiel iii. 15.

underlies it is neither of the East nor of the West, but world-wide. There are troubles in which we can best shew our sympathy, best aid our friends, not by spoken words, but by a silent sharing of their pain. We too can sometimes do little more than 'lift up our voices and weep' and then sit silent.

LECTURE
II.

—♦—
Chap. ii.

So far, my friends, we have studied word by word this immortal story of sorrow and submission. We need not wonder at the impression which it has made upon mankind. Let us gather up, for one moment, the results to which it has led us. Every word of the narrative after the first few verses has tended in one direction,—to heighten the contrast, to widen the gap, between Job's deserts, if I may use such a term, and Job's destiny. The two were brought before us in the opening verse of the first chapter as in entire and absolute harmony; perfect human goodness was wedded to perfect human happiness. But there came a moment, from which they have parted company. At every step we have seen them travel further apart, become more and more divergent. If his piety was great then, what is it now? If when first we knew him, he was *perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil*, how much more does he deserve such a description now; now when the sad 'sweet uses of adversity' have done their best work upon his spirit, and when he comes before us tried and purified in the very furnace of affliction? Yet on the other hand, the shadows that darkened the brightness of his life have grown thicker and blacker at every step; and the spectacle that we have before us, as we part to-day, is that of one who combines the highest, sweetest, and most dutiful love of God of which the human soul in his age was capable, with the very darkest and most hope-

LECTURE

II.

Chap. ii.

less misery. Such a spectacle would be not without its own perplexities even to the Christian of our own day, trained from childhood to the belief in a world where ‘tears shall be wiped from all eyes.’ But what a problem must such a story have presented to a pious Jew of an age that as yet had no further gospel than that *The Lord ordereth a good man’s going*¹; *That the righteous are never forsaken*; that God *shews mercy unto thousands in them that fear Him*²; that *whatsoever the good man doeth, it shall prosper*³; that *it is the ungodly* whose prosperity *is like chaff which the wind scattereth*; and that it is on those *who delight in wickedness, that God rains down fire and brimstone, storm and tempest*⁴, all the woes which had fallen on the head of the guiltless Job. Surely it might well seem as if ‘*the foundations were cast down*,’ the very foundations of their faith; surely men might well ask, *And what hath the righteous done*⁵? Such is the problem which will soon come before us, and will work like leaven in the hearts of those to whose words we shall listen. We close the book at this point to-day. We leave Job and his friends seated in silence. There is calm around them, but we feel that the air is heavy, and that there is tempest in the sky. We shall hear the storm burst and the thunder roll when next we meet.

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 23, 25.⁴ Ps. xi. 7.² Exod. xx. 6.³ Ps. i. 4, 5.⁵ Ps. xi. 3 (Prayer Book).

LECTURE III.

CHAPTERS III—VII.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. III—VII.)

3 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And CHAPTER
2 Job answered and said : III.

3 Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said, There is a man child conceived.

4 Let that day be darkness ;
Let not God ¹regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it.

5 Let darkness and ²the shadow of death claim it for their own ;
Let a cloud dwell upon it ;
Let all that maketh black the day terrify it.

6 As for that night, let thick darkness seize upon it :
Let it not ³rejoice among the days of the year ;
Let it not come into the number of the months.

7 Lo, let that night be ⁴barren ;
Let no joyful voice come therein.

8 Let them curse it that curse the day,
Who are ⁵ready to rouse up leviathan.

9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark :
Let it look for light, but have none ;
Neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning :

10 Because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* womb,
Nor hid trouble from mine eyes.

11 Why died I not from the womb ?

Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly ?

12 Why did the knees receive me ?

Or why the breasts, that I should suck ?

13 For now should I have lien down and been quiet ;

I should have slept ; then had I been at rest :

¹ Or, *in-
quire after*

² Or, *deep
darkness
(and so
elsewhere)*

³ Some
ancient
versions
read, *be
joined
unto.*

⁴ Or,
solitary.

⁵ Or,
skilful.

CHAPTER	With kings and counsellors of the earth,	14
III.	Which ¹ built up waste places for themselves ;	
—♦—	Or with princes that had gold,	15
¹ Or, <i>built</i>	Who filled their houses with silver :	
<i>solitary</i>	Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been ;	16
<i>piles</i>	As infants which never saw light.	
² Or,	There the wicked cease from ² troubling ;	17
<i>raging</i>	And there the weary be at rest.	
	There the prisoners are at ease together ;	18
	They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.	
	The small and great are there ;	19
	And the servant is free from his master.	
	Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,	20
	And life unto the bitter in soul ;	
³ Heb.	Which ³ long for death, but it cometh not ;	21
<i>wait.</i>	And dig for it more than for hid treasures ;	
⁴ Or, <i>unto</i>	Which rejoice ⁴ exceedingly,	22
<i>exultation</i>	And are glad, when they can find the grave?	
	<i>Why is light given</i> to a man whose way is hid,	23
	And whom God hath hedged in?	
⁵ Or, <i>like</i>	For my sighing cometh ⁵ before I eat,	24
<i>my meat.</i>	And my roarings are poured out like water.	
⁶ Or, <i>the</i>	For ⁶ the thing which I fear cometh upon me,	25
<i>thing</i>	And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me.	
<i>which I</i>	⁷ I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I rest ;	26
<i>feared is</i>	But trouble cometh.	
<i>come &c.</i>		
⁷ Or, <i>I</i>	Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,	4
<i>was not at</i>	If one assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?	2
<i>case . . .</i>	But who can withhold himself from speaking?	
<i>yet trouble</i>	Behold, thou hast instructed many,	3
<i>came</i>	And thou hast strengthened the weak hands.	
	Thy words have upholden him that was falling,	4
⁸ Heb.	And thou hast confirmed the ⁸ feeble knees.	
<i>bowing.</i>	But now it is come unto thee, and thou ⁹ faintest ;	5
⁹ Or, <i>art</i>	It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.	
<i>grieved.</i>	Is not thy fear of God thy confidence,	6
	And thy hope the integrity of thy ways?	

- 7 Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright cut off? CHAPTER IV.
—♦—
8 According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
And sow ¹trouble, reap the same.
9 By the breath of God they perish,
And by the blast of his anger are they consumed.
10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion,
And the teeth of the young lions, are broken.
11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey,
And the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad.
12 Now a thing was ²secretly brought to me,
And mine ear received a whisper thereof.
13 In thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,
14 Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones to shake.
15 Then ³a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
16 It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof;
A form was before mine eyes:
⁴*There was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying*,
17 Shall mortal man ⁵be more just than God?
Shall a man ⁶be more pure than his Maker?
18 Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants;
And his angels he chargeth with folly:
19 How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Which are crushed ⁷before the moth!
20 ⁸Between morning and evening they are ⁹destroyed:
They perish for ever without any regarding it.
21 ¹⁰Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
They die, and that without wisdom.
5 Call now; is there any that will answer thee?
And to which of the ¹¹holy ones wilt thou turn?
2 For vexation killeth the foolish man,
And ¹²jealousy slayeth the silly one.
3 I have seen the foolish taking root:

¹ Or,
mischief

² Heb.
*brought by
stealth.*

³ Or, *a
breath
passed over*

⁴ Or, *I
heard a
still voice*

⁵ Or, *be
just before
God*

⁶ Or, *be
pure before
his Maker*

⁷ Or, *like*

⁸ Or, *From
morning to
evening*

⁹ Heb.
*broken in
pieces.*

¹⁰ Or, *Is not
their excel-
lency which
is in them
removed?*

¹¹ See ch.

xv. 15.

¹² Or, *indig-
nation*

CHAPTER	But suddenly I cursed his habitation.	
V.	His children are far from safety,	4
—♦—	And they are crushed in the gate,	
	Neither is there any to deliver them.	
	Whose harvest the hungry eateth up,	5
	And taketh it even out of the thorns,	
¹ According to many ancient versions, <i>the thirsty swallow up.</i>	And ¹ the snare gapeth for their substance.	
	For ² affliction cometh not forth of the dust,	6
	Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ;	
	But man is born unto trouble,	7
	As ³ the sparks fly upward.	
² Or, <i>iniquity</i>	But as for me, I would seek unto God,	8
See ch. iv. 8.	And unto God would I commit my cause :	
	Which doeth great things and unsearchable ;	9
	Marvellous things without number :	
³ Heb. <i>the sons of flame or of lightning.</i>	Who giveth rain upon the earth,	10
	And sendeth waters upon the fields :	
	So that he setteth up on high those that be low ;	11
	And those which mourn are exalted to safety.	
	He frustrateth the devices of the crafty,	12
⁴ Or, <i>can perform nothing of worth</i>	So that their hands ⁴ cannot perform their enterprise.	
	He taketh the wise in their own craftiness :	13
	And the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.	
	They meet with darkness in the daytime,	14
	And grope at noonday as in the night.	
⁵ Heb. <i>out of their mouth.</i>	But he saveth from the sword ⁵ of their mouth,	15
	Even the needy from the hand of the mighty.	
	So the poor hath hope,	16
	And iniquity stoppeth her mouth.	
⁶ Or, <i>reproveth</i>	Behold, happy is the man whom God ⁶ correcteth :	17
	Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.	
	For he maketh sore, and bindeth up ;	18
	He woundeth, and his hands make whole.	
	He shall deliver thee in six troubles ;	19
	Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.	
	In famine he shall redeem thee from death ;	20
	And in war from the power of the sword.	

CHAPTER
V.



- 21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue ;
Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.
- 22 At destruction and dearth thou shalt laugh ;
Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
- 23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field ;
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.
- 24 And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace ;
And thou shalt visit thy ¹fold, and ²shalt miss nothing.
- 25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great,
And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
- 26 Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
Like as a shock of corn cometh in in its season.
- 27 Lo this, we have searched it, so it is ;
Hear it, and know thou it ³for thy good.
- 6 Then Job answered and said,
2 O that my vexation were but weighed,
And my calamity laid in the balances together !
3 For now it would be heavier than the sands of the seas :
Therefore have my words been rash.
- 4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me,
The poison whereof my spirit drinketh up :
The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.
- 5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass ?
Or loweth the ox over his fodder ?
- 6 Can that which hath no savour be eaten without salt ?
Or is there any taste in ⁴the white of an egg ?
- 7 ⁵My soul refuseth to touch *them* ;
They are as loathsome meat to me.
- 8 Oh that I might have my request ;
And that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for !
- 9 Even that it would please God to crush me ;
That he would let loose his hand, and cut me off !
- 10 Then should I yet have comfort ;
⁶Yea, I would ⁷exult in pain ⁸that spareth not :
⁹For I have not ¹⁰denied the words of the Holy One.
- 11 What is my strength, that I should wait ?
And what is mine end, that I should be patient ?

¹ Or,
habitation

² Or, *shalt*
not err

³ Heb. *for*
thyself.

⁴ Or, *the*
juice of
purslain

⁵ Or, What
things *my*
soul refused
to touch,
these are as
my loath-
some meat

⁶ Or,
Though I
shrink
back

⁷ Or,
harden
myself

⁸ Or,
though he
spare not

⁹ Or, *That*
¹⁰ Or,
concealed

CHAPTER	Is my strength the strength of stones?	12
VI.	Or is my flesh of brass?	
—♦—	Is it not that I have no help in me,	13
¹ Or, <i>sound wisdom</i>	And that ¹ effectual working is driven quite from me? To him that is ready to faint kindness <i>should be shewed</i> 14 from his friend ;	
² Or, <i>Else might he forsake</i>	² Even to him that forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,	15
<i>Or, But he forsaketh</i>	As the channel of brooks that pass away ; Which are black by reason of the ice, <i>And</i> wherein the snow hideth itself :	16
³ Or, <i>shrink</i>	What time they ³ wax warm, they vanish : When it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.	17
⁴ Or, <i>The paths of their way are turned aside</i>	⁴ The caravans <i>that travel</i> by the way of them turn aside ; They go up into the waste, and perish. The caravans of Tema looked, The companies of Sheba waited for them. They were ashamed because they had hoped ; They came thither, and were confounded.	18 19 20
⁵ Another reading is, <i>are like thereto.</i>	For now ye ⁵ are nothing ; Ye see a terror, and are afraid. Did I say, Give unto me ? Or, Offer a present for me of your substance ? Or, Deliver me from the adversary's hand ? Or, Redeem me from the hand of the oppressors ? Teach me, and I will hold my peace : And cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are words of uprightness ! But what doth your arguing reprove ?	21 22 23 24 25
⁶ Or, <i>for the wind</i>	Do ye imagine to reprove words ?	26
⁷ Or, <i>And it will be evident unto you if I lie</i>	Seeing that the speeches of one that is desperate are ⁶ as wind. Yea, ye would cast <i>lots</i> upon the fatherless, And make merchandise of your friend. Now therefore be pleased to look upon me ;	27 28
⁸ Heb. <i>my righteousness is in it.</i>	⁷ For surely I shall not lie to your face. Return, I pray you, let there be no injustice ; Yea, return again, ⁸ my cause is righteous.	29

30 Is there injustice on my tongue?

Cannot my taste discern mischievous things?

7 Is there not a ¹warfare to man upon earth?

And are not his days like the days of an hireling?

2 As a servant that earnestly desireth the shadow,

And as an hireling that looketh for his wages:

3 So am I made to possess months of vanity,

And wearisome nights are appointed to me.

4 When I lie down, I say,

²When shall I arise? but the night is long;

And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of
the day.

5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust;

My skin ³closeth up and breaketh out afresh.

6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,

And are spent without hope.

7 Oh remember that my life is wind:

Mine eye shall no more see good.

8 The eye of him that seeth me shall behold me no more:

Thine eyes shall be upon me, but I shall not be.

9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away,

So he that goeth down to ⁴Sheol shall come up no more.

10 He shall return no more to his house,

Neither shall his place know him any more.

11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth;

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

12 Am I a sea, or a sea-monster,

That thou settest a watch over me?

13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me,

My couch shall ease my complaint;

14 Then thou scarest me with dreams,

And terrifiest me through visions:

15 So that my soul chooseth strangling,

And death rather than *these* my bones.

16 ⁵I loathe *my life*; I ⁶would not live alway:

Let me alone; for my days are ⁷vanity.

CHAPTER
VII.

¹ Or, *time
of service*

² Or,
*When shall
I arise,
and the
night be
gone?*

³ Or, *is
broken and
become
loathsome*

⁴ Or, *the
grave*

⁵ Or, *I
waste away*

⁶ Or, *shall*

⁷ Or, *as a
brea'h*

CHAPTER	What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him,	17
VII.	And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him,	
—♦—	And that thou shouldest visit him every morning,	18
	And try him every moment?	
	How long wilt thou not look away from me,	19
	Nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?	
¹ Or, <i>can</i>	If I have sinned, what ¹ do I unto thee,	20
<i>I do</i>	O thou ² watcher of men?	
² Or,	Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee,	
<i>preserver</i>	So that I am a burden to myself?	
	And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take 21	
	away mine iniquity?	
	For now shall I lie down in the dust;	
	And thou shalt seek me diligently, but I shall not be.	

LECTURE III.

CHAPTERS¹ III—VII.

I INVITED your attention, when we last met, to the two opening chapters of the great Book, which we have come here to study. You will not, I hope, have thought that you were asked to linger at too great length over the scenes, so varied, and so impressive, which those chapters placed in such rapid succession before our eyes. You will scarcely wonder that such a tale, told so simply and so movingly, should have become a permanent and prized possession of generation after generation of the human family. You will forgive me therefore, in consideration of the necessarily varying nature of our congregation, for pausing once more to remind you that, important as is the bearing of these chapters on all that is to follow, yet that they do not constitute, as is so often taken for granted, the main portion of the Book of Job; that they are simply the Introduction, the prose introduction, you will let me once more remind you, to the sacred and sublime Poem to some study of which you are now invited. Let us turn at once to the first pages of that Poem as they lie before us to-day; printed and arranged, you will observe, in the Revised Version, no longer as Prose, but as Poetry.

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III.



What is the Poem's opening scene?

We left Job crouching in utter misery; yet calm and patient; the very model to all time of resignation to, and

¹ For the Revised Text of these Chapters see pages 47-54.

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Chap. iii.

acquiescence in, the Will of an unseen God—a God Whom he on his part had served so faithfully, and Who on His side had recognised so fully, before other than human circles, His servant's full fidelity. *Hast thou considered*, we read, *My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth?* In no single word, we read, had Job *sinned with his*¹ *lips* or blamed the God Who had laid this burden on him. Friends also were by his side, who sympathised with his pain, and shared his attitude of grief. Overwhelmed by the spectacle of woe, they could find no words to solace their afflicted friend. *None*, we read, *spoke a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great*².

So ended what we read last time. And with this picture impressed upon our memory, we shall now see, if I may so speak with reverence, the curtain lifted; the first Act of the tragedy, of which we hold the prologue—I use the word with some hesitation³—in our hands, will begin to pass into our view. And in a moment all is changed. One short and simple line of prose ushers us into another world of feeling and of language to that in which we moved so lately. Out of that long and awful silence comes the voice of Job. It is little more than a loud and bitter cry of anguish. *After this*, we read, *Job opened his mouth and cursed his day*. Here then is the first, the greatest, the most abrupt, of all changes. The very central figure of those that meet our eye is other than he was. The silence that had followed his words of calm submission is changed into deep but passionate moans, or into clamorous and wild cries of despair. Read, my friends, the third chapter. Put away all the glosses, all the forced interpretations, by which good men have tried to rid and empty of its true force

ver. i.

¹ i. 22; ii. 10.² ii. 13.³ See p. 18.

and pathos that long wail of human agony. Where in the world will you find a sadder strain of more hopeless, uncontrolled, and unbroken lamentation and mourning? He curses with all the wealth of Eastern imagery—mingling in his wild cries strange snatches of a long-forgotten astrology¹—the day, the hated day, that is marked by the memory of his origin and birth into a world of pain. The short couplets of Hebrew poetry prolong themselves, and are expanded, as you will see, into three-lined verses, as though with the vain effort to compress within due limits the first full and abounding outrush of his long imprisoned agony. They are filled to the brim, they run over, with pain. ‘Better for this man,’ he cries in terrible accents, ‘had he never been born. Had he but died on that accursed day, he would have slept the quiet slumber which Death, the great leveller, brings to monarchs who sleep each in their solitary pile—to the lordly builder of stately pyramids, even as to the infant untimely born, or the weary slave who tastes at last in Death the sleep of freedom.’

LECTURE
III.

—♦—
Chap. iii.
ver. 13-16.

ver. 11-16.

*For now should I have lien down and been quiet;
I should have slept: then had I been at rest,
With kings and counsellors of the Earth,
Which built up solitary piles for themselves.*

ver. 13, 14.

I quote, as always, from the Revised Version, or from its marginal rendering.

*There, he cries, there in the grave,
The wicked cease from troubling,
And there the weary be at rest.
There the prisoners are at ease together;*

ver. 17-19.

¹ E. g. ‘Let them curse it who have power to *ban* days, and make them *infausti*; those who have power to rouse the Dragon that swallows up the Sun, and to bring eclipse and darkness.’—ver. 8.

LECTURE

III.

Chap. iii.

They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.

The small and great are there ;

And the servant is free from his master.

Some of the least bitter of all his words have passed, as you see, just as they stand, into the familiar poetry of our own land. Others, again, have their echo far and near in the world-wide music of sorrow, from the prophet Jeremiah¹ and from the poetry of Greece to the voices of our own land and age. And soon he passes for a moment beyond the narrow sphere of his own solitary trouble.

ver. 20, 21. *Why, he cries, is life given to those who are in misery ?
Which long for death, but it cometh not,
And dig for it more than for hid treasures.*

But he does not, as yet, let his eye range far over the sea of human misery. He comes back to his own seat upon the ash-heap, and ends at last the chapter with a plaintive cry that ease and rest and quiet are lost possessions :

ver. 26. *I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I rest ;
But trouble cometh.*

It is surely a very moving chapter. It requires, save for one or two allusions, as I said before, to an astrology that has passed away and to history that is uncertain, singularly little explanation. There are no doubt some obscurities in the language of our older Version, yet fewer, far fewer, than we shall find in the chapters that await us. The very intensity of feeling seems to fuse and burn away peculiarities of expression, and we have before us the simple and universal language of intolerable pain.

¹ Jer. xx. 14-18 ; Soph. Oed. Col. 1225 :—

Μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νι-
κᾶ λόγον, κ.τ.λ.

And we feel also that it is very true to nature. In this sudden, startling, and entire change of attitude on the part of the sufferer, we read a type of the effect of many an unrecorded sorrow, in times and countries nearer to our own. There are losses, there are blows, which men and women sometimes meet bravely or calmly at the first shock. They do not sound the full depth of their bitter import in an hour, or in a day, or in seven days. How often may we have felt the need as well as the wisdom and the force of those closing words of the Burial Service lesson. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Job's earlier resignation, Job's later outcries, may have been reproduced each in turn on a smaller scale, within the experience of some of those whom I see before me; and there is something as natural and lifelike in what we read, as if the scene had come, not from the pen of some unknown son of Israel, but from that of the Shakespeare whose monument stands hard by us. At the same time, every word that we have read helps to impress upon us that to which I have so often already called your attention. We are reminded at every step that the portion, the main and substantial portion of the Book, the threshold of which we have just passed, is separated by a great gulf from all that went before and led up to it. We are breathing, and we shall breathe, another, a more troubled and more stormy atmosphere. The skies in those earlier scenes were growing dark and sombre, but all around was calm and still. Now, as I warned you would be the case, the winds have begun to moan, and the thunder to roar.

For the change of which I speak is not confined to Job. The long and kindly silence of his friends—you will not, I am

LECTURE
III.

Chapters
iii, iv.

LECTURE

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Chap. iv.

sure, listen to those who tell us that that silence was other than the expression of a mute sympathy—is broken at last. It is Eliphaz the Temanite, whose name and tribal designation point to some district, in or near the land of Edom¹, famed in Scripture for its wisdom, who opens the debate that is to come. He is the eldest, we may presume, of the three friends, and his words strike the keynote which they each in turn are to follow. *To follow* I say advisedly. All attempts to make the three friends the representatives of three different schools of thought, as we might have expected in a modern dialogue, seem to me, I confess, mainly illusory. Is it not rather that they represent the majority, or rather the totality, of the religious world, as united against the one solitary distressful thinker who sits or stands before them?

But the words of Eliphaz, whatever remonstrance or reproof they contain, are not unkindly words: certainly not meant for such. They are well weighed and dignified, deferential and courteous, even apologetic in tone and form. *Will* ver. 2. *thou be grieved*, he says, *if one assay to commune with thee?* He is shocked at Job's wild outburst of despair. 'Once,' he ver. 3-5. adds, 'thou didst instruct and sustain others;'

*But now it is come unto thee, and thou faintest;
It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*

In words made for the first time intelligible in our new Version he suggests to him his former Godfearing and stainless life as a ground, even in that dark hour, for confidence and hope.

*Is not thy fear of God thy confidence?
And thy hope the integrity² of thy ways?*

¹ Gen. xxxvi. 4; Jer. xlix. 7.

² Contrast with this the A.V. *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*

‘God will never leave, never has left,’ he says, ‘the innocent to perish.’ It is the guilty, he reminds him, on whom His wrath does its full work. And he gathers up the experience of his simple Arab life in a proverb common¹ doubtless to mankind from the days of the earliest husbandman,

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III.
—♦—
Chap. iv.
ver. 7-9.

*According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
And sow trouble, reap the same.*

He pictures the foes of the innocent under the guise of the strong fierce lions, whom he designates, with the rich and varied vocabulary of an age familiar with them, under five different names,—the lions, still, when he spoke, over a wide area the terror of our race; these *the blast of God's anger consumes*. ver. 10, 11.

And as he speaks, he begins to point to that which is to be the very central question of the book. He is handling, even if thus far tenderly and half-unconsciously, a weapon which is soon to rive the very heart of his friend, and bring to him a pang keener than any which has yet torn and tried him. But he speaks more or less indirectly, obscurely, half-oracularly. He wishes to warn Job against the vehemence of his own complaints; to remind him of the imperfection of man, and the unapproachable justice and purity of God. He relates in striking language how a revelation of divine truth came to himself.

*In thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,
Fear came upon me and trembling,
Which made all my bones to shake.*

ver. 12-21.

He tells him how a strange shuddering had come over him, and a breath seemed to fan his face, and a formless shape,

¹ For its highest application see Gal. vi. 7, 8.

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- ‘If shape it might be called that shape¹ had none,’ had stood before him. He tells him how, as his hair stood erect with awe, a ‘still small voice’ broke the silence, and reminded him of the shortcomings and limitations in God’s sight even of Angels, and of the blindness and frailty of man, who passes away like the short-lived moth or butterfly, that flutters for an hour in the morning and is gone before the evening—of man, the *tent-cord* of whose fragile tenement is withdrawn, and he sinks to nothingness ere he has laid his hand upon wisdom, too weak and short-lived to attain to the higher knowledge. You will notice the two
- ver. 19, 20. metaphors; that of the butterfly, so world-wide; the other, voiceless to us, who have left tent-life so many centuries behind.
- Chap. v. And, this said, he goes on in the next chapter to hint
- ver. 1, 2. softly that anger and impatience would find no countenance among God’s ‘Holy Ones,’ i. e. His Angels; nay, may be fatal to those who give way to them. For they will place them in the ranks of *the foolish*, i. e. the wicked, whose undeserved prosperity passes, as his own observation has shown him, like a dream, and is followed by the ruin of himself and of his
- ver. 3-5. children. *I*, he says, *have seen the foolish*, i. e. Godless, *taking root*, *But suddenly I cursed*, pronounced the doom of, *his habitation*. He reminds him also of the inherent sinfulness,
- ver. 6, 7. and therefore the inevitable suffering (for suffering does not grow like a chance weed²), of human nature; and then, in

¹ Paradise Lost, ii. 667. We may well believe Milton to have had the passage before his mind.

² This appears to be the meaning of verses 6 and 7. The wide diffusion of fragments of the Book of Job is attested by a singular quotation of verse 6 in Stanley’s *Dark Continent*, as suggested by the comparative safety of the solitary river islands, as opposed to the neighbourhood of the ferocious natives who lined its banks, vol. ii. ch. xi.

very stately and noble and even affectionate lines, he bids his friend *commit his cause to God*, the God *which doeth great things and unsearchable*; the beneficent Lord of Creation,

Who giveth rain upon the earth,

And sendeth waters on the field;

the wise and powerful governor of the world, *Who taketh the wise in their own craftiness*, Who (how incessantly do we meet the thought) ‘humbles the proud and insolent, but looks with favour on the oppressed and poor.’ And next, in words which we must all feel to breathe a spirit of tenderness on a level with their essential, even if misapplied, wisdom and beauty, he bids his friend accept his suffering as the welcome chastisement of a loving God,—not put away or despise His correcting rod.

Behold, he says, happy is the man whom God correcteth : ver. 17.

Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.

It is a fruitful thought, this corrective and remedial power of suffering, which he touches for a moment, even if only for a moment, with exceeding tenderness and force : ‘Therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty.’

And he promises him, in some ten touching verses, that if he does this, the great Physician,

Who maketh sore and bindeth up,

Who woundeth and His hands make whole,

will even yet heal his wounds, and lead him gently through a long vista of peace and happiness, described with a rich prodigality of vivid Eastern images, to a timely and happy end. ‘Like ripe fruit he shall drop into the lap of his mother-earth.’

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,

Like as a shock of corn cometh in in its season.

LECTURE
III.

—♦—
Chap. v.
ver. 8-16.

ver. 18-27.

ver. 26.

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III.

Chap. v.

Note well, my friends, his language. Can anything seem at first sight sweeter, tenderer, wiser, more deeply religious? One verse of his speech finds its echo, alike in the Book of Proverbs¹ and in an impressive passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews² which our Church has borrowed for the 'visitation' of those, who, like Job, are sick and afflicted. Another³ is the one only verse of the whole book which is, beyond question, directly quoted in the New Testament. Take his words fairly, and those of Job fairly, each i.e. as they are spoken; not as wrested and twisted and tortured into meanings quite alien to them. Place them side by side. Do not these seem the language of some thoughtful Christian friend and consoler? those the mere sick, impatient, uncontrolled cry of torture? And the questions which we shall soon have before us are these. How is it that our sympathies are—is it not so?—with Job, not with his friend or friends? And how is it that God's judgment will be given, later on, entirely in accordance with our sympathies? This is after all one of the grave and real problems of the book: we shall see it grow into distincter shape as we read on.

One thing is clear. The words of Eliphaz, however well meant, fall wide of their mark. Truth after truth has been uttered by him. But these truths bring no comfort or conviction to his afflicted friend. To him this wholesome food seems poison.

Chap. vi.
ver. 1-10.

We open chapter vi, and once more Job speaks. If he does not return to the mere passionate cry of his first utterance, his words have within them something of an even deeper strain of pain and torture. His meaning is often

¹ iii. 11.² xii. 5.³ ver. 13; see I Cor. iii. 19.

absolutely lost in the perplexed and perplexing phrases of his language as represented by our Authorized Version. You may trace it without much difficulty in the new Revision. 'Ah!' he says, 'could my cries be once fairly weighed against my pain, then men would see, why my words have been so wild and rash. The arrows of God,' he says, as a Psalmist sings¹, 'stick fast in my frame; there is poison in my veins; the terrors of God are embattled against my besieged spirit. I cry out,' he says, 'even as the dumb creatures, that cry out at nature's prompting in the pangs of hunger. I cry because I must. The feast of life has been turned to loathsomeness; are my lips to smile over the bitter and repulsive banquet of anguish?'

LECTURE
III.

Chap. vi.
ver. 2, 3.

ver. 4.

ver. 5-7.

*The arrows of the Almighty are within me,
The poison thereof my spirit drinketh up.
Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?
Or loweth the ox over his fodder?
What things my soul refuseth to touch,
These are as my loathsome meat.*

'Ah!' he cries, 'for the one blessing that God can give me, the gift of Death. *Even that it would please God to crush me.* Place this before me, and I should exult even in unsparing pain. I should pass away'—and here we have the first trace of what he will so often put forth as his very shield and defence—'with the sense that I have not *denied or disobeyed the words of the Holy One.* I should die calmly, for I should die innocent.' It is bold language; but he does not rest there. 'Why talk to me,' he says to his friend, 'of the future? What end have I in view to make me patient?'

ver. 8, 9.

ver. 10.

ver. 11-13.

¹ Psalm xxxviii. 2.

LECTURE *Is my strength the strength of stones?*

III. *Or is my flesh of brass?*

—♦—

Chap. vi. Or rather of quivering, throbbing, sensitive yet helpless flesh and blood? 'Ah! my friends,' he says, apostrophizing all three, in answer to their leader, 'where is your pity, where your sympathy for your despairing and much tried friend?'

ver. 14. *To him that is ready to faint kindness should be shewed from his friend; Even to him that forsaketh the fear of the Almighty,*

ver. 15-21. even, i.e. if for a moment he fail in resignation. 'Surely in my sorrow, even if in fault, you are to me as the deceitful torrent to the wayfaring caravan; rushing full at one season, and turbid with the cold ice, and swollen with snow; but dried up and looked for in vain in the hour of need, when the sun beats down on the thirsty traveller.'

*The caravans that travel by the way of them turn aside;
They go up into the waste and perish.*

The caravans of Tema looked (but looked in vain).

The companies of Sheba waited for them,

waited for the stream that never came. Ask some Australian explorer, ask some soldier from the deserts that skirt the Nile, —he will tell you the deadly significance of the metaphor.

ver. 22-30. And then, in bitter agony, he asks what else but the precious gift of sympathy had he sought from them. No gifts of money, no means to ransom him from some greedy freebooter or powerful foe. 'Do not offer me,' he seems to say, 'these pious generalities, these good texts, this good advice; show me my sin, and I will repent of it. Do not dwell on my hot words of pain, do not take
ver. 27. advantage, *make merchandise of*, your lost friend. But begin your course again, do me no wrong; *right is on my side*. Do I not know good from evil? Yes, my cause is

righteous, my miseries are undeserved. *Return, I pray you,* go back upon your words, *Yea, return again, my cause is righteous.*'

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Our thoughts, as we read this language and are tempted to condemn its touch, its more than touch, of petulance, must go back a moment to the character of the speaker as sketched once and again in the Introduction. *And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil; the greatest, but lately, of the sons of the East.*

And he turns in the seventh chapter from his friends, false friends he already calls them, to the God Who is afflicting him. 'Ah! how hard,' he says, 'is man's destiny. Life is like the weary day of the poor soldier, or the hireling toiler, each doomed to suffer at another's will. And as the slave longs for the evening shadows that bring him respite, or the hireling for his pay, so through weary nights of pain, and tossings to and fro, and cravings for the dawn'—you will note the vividness of the picture—'I yearn for the end.' Listen to him.

Chap. vii.
ver. 1-6.

When I lie down I say,

When shall I arise? but the night is long;

And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

ver. 4.

Some of us may have read but lately of,

'Pain that . . . at night

Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings him back to the curse of the light¹!'

But no singer of any land or age can surpass the simple pathos of Job. 'Life that should be long and happy is short and bitter. Swift as a shuttle's flight go the hopeless days that lead me to my doom.'

¹ 'Vastness,' by Lord Tennyson. Macmillan's Magazine, Nov. 1885.

LECTURE
III.Chap. vii.
ver. 7-11.

‘Ah! remember,’ he says with a pathetic cry, ‘Thou great Creator, how frail my life; how it must end for ever in death.’

Oh remember that my life is wind:

Mine eye shall no more see good.

Soon the eye of him that seeth me shall behold me no more:

Thine eye shall be upon me, but I shall not be.

As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away,

So he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

He shall return no more to his house,

Neither shall his place know him any more.

‘And therefore,’ he says, ‘with this final doom so near ahead, I will speak boldly; with a courage born of the approach of death.’

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

And his words are no longer, as heretofore, mere cries of anguish; there begins to mingle with his complaints a note of reproach that will soon wear a still more startling form.

ver. 12-15.

‘Am I,’ he cries, as in half-delirious pain, ‘a raging ocean or a fierce sea monster, that Thou, my God, must needs guard against me with these plagues, these nightly terrors, and these ghastly visions of my dread malady, which make death, any death, seem a boon after the life I loathe? No monster I, but a poor weak creature.’ And then he takes the words of an immortal Psalm¹, familiar to our ears, and, as it seems, to his, and turns them from a note of exultant praise to a wild wail of torture. ‘*Leave me alone,*’ he cries, ‘*my days are as a breath. What is man that thou shouldst magnify him,* by making him thus the object of Thy heavy scourge? that day by day thou *visitest* that humble weak-

ver. 16-19.

¹ Psalm viii. ‘A bitter parody’ is the forcible phrase of Dr. Cheyne.

ling, yea, *visitest* him,' as the Psalmist sings, 'but, alas! with the wrath of heaven? Ah! for one moment give me rest,' for that brief space which, in Arab phrase, answers to our 'twinkling of an eye.'

LECTURE
III.
—♦—
Chap. vii.

The pious reader may well shrink back from language which before was often veiled to him in the safe obscurity of unmeaning words, and now stands out in its naked and almost appalling force.

'*If I have sinned*,' he goes on to cry, 'what is that to thee, ver. 20, 21. O stern unfeeling *watcher* of *mankind*?''

It is his God, you will remember whom he, the pious Job, is thus apostrophising. 'I, the poor pismire in the dust, will my error, or my wrong-doing affect Omnipotence? Ah! pardon my transgression, whatever it be, ere it be too late! A little while and I shall lie down in the dust, and even thy keen eye will look for me in vain.'

What are we to say to such language? It is a monotone that you will hardly find monotonous. I have placed it before you at some length, passing by but little, in order that you may fully enter into something of the real character, and the real difficulties, of the book that is before us. You have listened to two long utterances, measured speeches we can hardly call them, on the part of Job. What is the character of his language? Where is the patience, where the submission, so calm, so dutiful, so beautiful, of the Job whom we knew before? Is there a trace of it left? Surely from first to last we have not as yet one touch of such meek acquiescence in suffering as we have seen, some of us, on beds of pain: such as we would pray earnestly to attain to, in some measure, in our own hour of trial. We see nothing of the frame of mind in which a Moslem, whose very name implies sub-

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III.
—♦—

mission, or a Stoic, a Marcus Aurelius, to say nothing of a Christian, would wish to meet the sharpest pang. We feel—do we not?—that the very object of these wild cries is partly to intensify our sense of the woes that fell on Job, yet mainly to make us feel how boundless is his bewilderment at finding this terrible measure of suffering meted out, as the seeming recompense for a life of innocence.

And yet we, the readers, are, must be, intended to feel with him. Admirable, pious, well intentioned as are the words of Eliphaz, they seem to belong to another spiritual world than that of Job's cries. We cannot but feel the sharp contrast between them, and you will, I hope, feel with me that some great question must be at stake, some vital problem stirring in the air, or we should not be called on to listen, on the one hand to the calm, well-rounded, unimpeachable teaching of Eliphaz, and on the other side to the bitter, impassioned complaints, the almost rebellious cries, of one whose praise is in all the churches.

This then is one question which will be pressed on us more and more, as we read the book. How is it that the Saint, the saintly hero, who stands in the fore-front of the drama, uses language which we dare not use, which we would pray to be preserved from using in our bitterest hour of suffering? How is it that, thus far at least, the foremost of his opponents speaks nothing which is not to be found on the lips of Psalmist or of Prophet, little that is not worthy of lips which have been touched by a still higher teaching? How is it that for all this, we shall, as we know, in due time have the highest of all authorities for holding that he and they, in their insight into the highest truths, fall below the Job whom they rebuke, and whom we ourselves cannot

but reprove? Surely so far, the great Judge of this debate must be listening with full approval to the good Eliphaz; with stern, if pitiful, displeasure to the wild cries of Job.

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III.

If I have done no more than put before you this one subject for reflection, I shall have not wasted your time to-day. We shall deal further with the question when we meet again. For the riddle will grow and grow as the dialogue proceeds; though the answer may also in some degree begin to unfold itself. As we see the most edifying of truths, and the most earnest of exhortations fail to produce their effect on the spirit of God's suffering servant, we shall begin to suspect that the book is meant to bring home to us some lesson that lies outside these exhortations, and to suggest some truth that stands apart from those truths. The nature of this truth and that lesson we shall see less dimly as we read on.

Nov. 28, 1885.

LECTURE IV.

CHAPTERS VIII—XI.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPTERS VIII—XI.)

CHAPTER VIII.

- 8 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How long wilt thou speak these things?
And *how long* shall the words of thy mouth be *like* a mighty
wind?
3 Doth God pervert judgement?
Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
4 ¹If thy children have sinned against him,
And he have delivered them into the hand of their trans-
gression:
5 If thou wouldest seek diligently unto God,
And make thy supplication to the Almighty;
6 If thou wert pure and upright;
Surely now he would awake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.
7 And though thy beginning was small,
Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.
8 For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age,
And apply myself to that which their fathers have searched
out:
9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing,
Because our days upon earth are a shadow:)
10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee,
And utter words out of their heart?
11 Can the ²rush grow up without mire?
Can the ³flag grow without water?
12 Whilst it is yet in its greenness, *and* not cut down,
It withereth before any *other* herb.
13 So are the paths of all that forget God;

¹ Or, *If thy
children
sinned . . .
he delivered
&c.*

² Or,
papyrus
³ Or, *reed-
grass*

CHAPTER	And the hope of the godless man shall perish :	
VIII.	Whose confidence shall ¹ break in sunder,	14
—♦—	And whose trust is a spider's ² web.	
¹ Or, <i>be cut off</i>	He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand :	15
² Heb.	He shall hold fast thereby, but it shall not endure.	
<i>house.</i>	He is green before the sun,	16
	And his shoots go forth over his garden.	
³ Or, <i>beside the spring</i>	His roots are wrapped ³ about the heap,	17
	He beholdeth the place of stones.	
	If he be destroyed from his place,	18
	Then it shall deny him, <i>saying</i> , I have not seen thee.	
	Behold, this is the joy of his way,	19
⁴ Or, <i>dust</i>	And out of the ⁴ earth shall others spring.	
	Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man,	20
	Neither will he uphold the evil-doers.	
⁵ Or, <i>Till he fill</i>	⁵ He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter,	21
	And thy lips with shouting.	
	They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame ;	22
	And the tent of the wicked shall be no more.	
	Then Job answered and said,	9
	Of a truth I know that it is so :	2
⁶ Or, <i>For</i>	⁶ But how can man be just ⁷ with God ?	
⁷ Or, <i>before</i>	⁸ If he be pleased to contend with him,	3
⁸ Or, <i>If one should desire . . . he could not &c.</i>	He cannot answer him one of a thousand.	
	<i>He is</i> wise in heart, and mighty in strength :	4
	Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered ?	
	Which removeth the mountains, and they know it not	
	When he overturneth them in his anger.	
	Which shaketh the earth out of her place,	6
	And the pillars thereof tremble.	
	Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not ;	7
	And sealeth up the stars.	
	Which alone stretcheth out the heavens,	8
⁹ Heb.	And treadeth upon the ⁹ waves of the sea.	
<i>high places.</i>	Which maketh the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,	9
	And the chambers of the south.	
	Which doeth great things past finding out ;	10

Yea, marvellous things without number.

11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not :

He passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

12 Behold, he seizeth *the prey*, who can ¹hinder him?

Who will say unto him, What doest thou?

13 God will not withdraw his anger ;

The helpers of ²Rahab ³do stoop under him.

14 How much less shall I answer him,

And choose out my words *to reason* with him?

15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer ;

I would make supplication to ⁴mine adversary.

16 If I had called, and he had answered me ;

Yet would I not believe that he hearkened unto my voice.

17 ⁵For he breaketh me with a tempest,

And multiplieth my wounds without cause.

18 He will not suffer me to take my breath,

But filleth me with bitterness.

19 ⁶If *we speak* of the strength of the mighty, ⁷lo, *he is there!*

And if of judgement, who will appoint me a time?

20 Though I be righteous, mine own mouth shall condemn me :

Though I be perfect, ⁸it shall prove me perverse.

21 ⁹I am ¹⁰perfect ; I regard not myself ;

I despise my life.

22 It is all one ; therefore I say,

He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

23 If the scourge slay suddenly,

He will mock at the ¹¹trial of the innocent.

24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked :

He covereth the faces of the judges thereof ;

If *it be* not *he*, who then is it?

25 Now my days are swifter than a ¹²post :

They flee away, they see no good.

26 They are passed away as the ¹³swift ships :

As the eagle that swoopeth on the prey.

27 If I say, I will forget my complaint,

I will put off my *sad* countenance, and ¹⁴be of good cheer :

28 I am afraid of all my sorrows,

CHAPTER
IX.

¹ Or, *turn him back*

² Or, *arrogancy*
See Is. xxx.

7.

³ Or, *did*

⁴ Or, *him that would judge me*

⁵ Heb. *He who.*

⁶ Or, *If we speak of strength, lo, he is mighty*

⁷ Or, *Lo, here am I, saith he ; and if of judgement, Who &c.*

⁸ Or, *he*

⁹ Or, *Though I be perfect, I will not regard &c.*

¹⁰ See ch. i.

1.

¹¹ Or, *calamity*

¹² Or, *runner*

¹³ Heb. *ships of reed.*

¹⁴ Heb. *brighten up.*

CHAPTER	I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.	
IX.	I shall be condemned ;	29
—♦—	Why then do I labour in vain ?	
¹ Another reading is, <i>with snow.</i>	If I wash myself ¹ with snow water,	30
	And ² make my hands never so clean ;	
² Heb. <i>cleanse my hands with lye.</i>	Yet wilt thou plunge me in the ditch,	31
	And mine own clothes shall abhor me.	
	For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him,	32
	That we should come together in judgement.	
³ Or, <i>umpire</i>	There is no ³ daysman betwixt us,	33
	That might lay his hand upon us both.	
	Let him take his rod away from me,	34
	And let not his terror make me afraid :	
	Then would I speak, and not fear him ;	35
	For I am not so in myself.	
	My soul is weary of my life ;	10
	I will give free course to my complaint ;	
	I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.	
	I will say unto God, Do not condemn me ;	2
	Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.	
	Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress,	3
⁴ Heb. <i>labour.</i>	That thou shouldest despise the ⁴ work of thine hands,	
	And shine upon the counsel of the wicked ?	
	Hast thou eyes of flesh,	4
	Or seest thou as man seeth ?	
	Are thy days as the days of man,	5
	Or thy years as man's days,	
	That thou inquirest after mine iniquity,	6
	And searchest after my sin,	
	Although thou knowest that I am not wicked ;	7
	And there is none that can deliver out of thine hand ?	
	Thine hands have framed me and fashioned me	8
	Together round about ; yet thou dost destroy me.	
	Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as clay ;	9
	And wilt thou bring me into dust again ?	
	Hast thou not poured me out as milk,	10
	And curdled me like cheese ?	

CHAPTER
X.

¹ Or, *care*

² Or, *I am filled with ignominy, but look thou . . . for it increaseth : thou &c.*

³ Or, *Host after host is against me*

⁴ Another reading is, *let him cease, and leave me alone.*

⁵ Heb. *brighten up.*

- 11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews.
- 12 Thou hast granted me life and favour,
And thy ¹visitation hath preserved my spirit.
- 13 Yet these things thou didst hide in thine heart ;
I know that this *is* with thee :
- 14 If I sin, then thou markest me,
And thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.
- 15 If I be wicked, woe unto me ;
And if I be righteous, yet shall I not lift up my head ;
² Being filled with ignominy
And looking upon mine affliction.
- 16 And if *my head* exalt itself, thou huntest me as a lion :
And again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.
- 17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me,
And increasest thine indignation upon me ;
³ Changes and warfare are with me.
- 18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb ?
I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me.
- 19 I should have been as though I had not been ;
I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.
- 20 Are not my days few ? ⁴cease then,
And let me alone, that I may ⁵take comfort a little,
- 21 Before I go whence I shall not return,
Even to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death ;
- 22 A land of thick darkness, as darkness *itself* ;
A land of the shadow of death, without any order,
And where the light is as darkness.
- 11 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,
2 Should not the multitude of words be answered ?
And should a man full of talk be justified ?
3 Should thy boastings make men hold their peace ?
And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed ?
4 For thou sayest, My doctrine is pure,
And I am clean in thine eyes.
5 But Oh that God would speak,
And open his lips against thee ;

CHAPTER	And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom,	6
XI.	¹ That it is manifold in effectual working!	
—♦♦—	Know therefore that God ² exacteth of thee less than thine	
¹ Or, <i>For sound wisdom is manifold</i>	iniquity deserveth.	
² Or, <i>re-mitteth</i> (Heb. <i>causeth to be forgotten</i>) <i>unto thee of thine iniquity</i>	³ Canst thou by searching find out God?	7
	Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?	
	⁴ It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?	8
	Deeper than ⁵ Sheol; what canst thou know?	
	The measure thereof is longer than the earth,	9
	And broader than the sea.	
	If he pass through, and shut up,	10
	And ⁶ call unto judgement, then who can hinder him?	
	For he knoweth vain men:	11
³ Or, <i>Canst thou find out the deep things of God?</i>	He seeth iniquity also, ⁷ even though he consider it not.	
	⁸ But vain man is void of understanding,	12
	Yea, man is born <i>as</i> a wild ass's colt.	
⁴ Heb. <i>The heights of heaven.</i>	If thou set thine heart aright,	13
	And stretch out thine hands toward him;	
	If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,	14
⁵ Or, <i>the grave</i>	And let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents;	
	Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;	15
⁶ Heb. <i>call an assembly.</i>	Yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:	
	For thou shalt forget thy misery;	16
⁷ Or, <i>and him that considereth not</i>	Thou shalt remember it as waters that are passed away:	
	And <i>thy</i> life shall ⁹ be clearer than the noonday;	17
	Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning.	
⁸ Or, <i>But an empty man will get understanding, when a wild ass's colt is born a man</i>	And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope;	18
	Yea, thou shalt search <i>about thee</i> , and shalt take thy rest in safety.	
	Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid;	19
	Yea, many shall make suit unto thee.	
	But the eyes of the wicked shall fail,	20
	And ¹⁰ they shall have no way to flee,	
⁹ Or, <i>arise above</i>	And their hope shall be the giving up of the ghost.	
	¹⁰ Heb. <i>refuge is perished from them.</i>	

LECTURE IV.

CHAPTERS VIII—XI.

I PAUSED, when last we met here, at the end of the seventh chapter, at the close of the second of Job's plaintive wails of pain and bewilderment.

LECTURE
IV.

—♦—
Chap. viii.

You will have been struck, I am sure, by the sharp contrast between his present and his former attitude. You will have noticed also the collision, already showing itself, between his own view of the visitation that has fallen upon him, and that taken by the foremost and kindest of the friends who have come to console him. To-day we shall see this contrast grow more marked, and the breach grow wider and more insuperable. The language of his friends will become sterner; their interpretation of the meaning of his sufferings will be put forward more harshly and more distinctly; their view of his moral and spiritual condition will become more and more unfavourable. Job's language, on the other hand, charged as it is to the full with moans of pain, and ringing already with cries of impatience, will assume by degrees a more startling form than it has yet worn. We have seen already Job the Patient give place, we might almost say, to Job the Impatient. We shall see to-day, in the chapters that will now come before us, a change that passes beyond even this.

The second of his friends comes forward in the eighth

ver. i.

LECTURE
IV.—♦♦—
Chap. viii.
ver. 1.

Chapter. *Bildad the Shuhite* he is called, of the race we may conjecture of Shuah, a son of Abraham mentioned in Genesis¹ as having in his Father's lifetime settled 'in the East country.' At all events we have in him another of those 'Sons of the East' to whom Job himself belonged; an Arab chieftain of the seed of Abraham, it may be, but certainly no member of the chosen race.

He begins, you will notice², in a very different tone from that in which Eliphaz had spoken. There is not a word of apology, or any touch of friendly sympathy. There is no attempt to soothe and calm the sufferer. '*How long, how long,*' he begins, with the very words, *Quousque tandem*, with which the great Roman Orator opened his tremendous invective against Catiline. '*How long* shall thy rash railings go by us like a boisterous and unmeaning wind? Darest thou so much as hint that God, a Being of absolute justice, sends on thee, or any child of man, undeserved suffering?'

ver. 2.

ver. 3.

He grasps at once, you see, as we say, the nettle. He is quite sure that he has the key to the secret of the distribution in this world, of misery and happiness. It is a very simple solution. We shall meet it again and again as we go on. It is the doctrine that untimely death, that sickness, that adversity in every form, are alike signs of God's anger; that they visit mankind with unerring discrimination; are all what we call 'judgments'; are penalties, i.e. or chastisements, meant either simply to vindicate the broken law, or else to warn and reclaim the sinner. And so, in what we feel to be harsh and unfeeling terms, he applies at once this principle, like unsparing

¹ xxv. 2, 6.² For the Revised Text of these chapters see, as before, the pages immediately preceding.

cautery, to the wounds of his friend. 'If thy poor children,' he says, 'have been cut off for their sins, there is still time allowed *thee* for repentance. Turn diligently to God, and He will turn to thee; pray to the Almighty, show thyself pure and upright before Him, and his favour will be restored, and this dark chapter in thy life will end in a brightness that shall surpass all that went before.'

LECTURE
IV.

—♦—
Chap. viii.
ver. 4-6.

*'And though thy beginning was small,
Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.'*

ver. 7.

A quite unconscious and unintentional prediction, we may note, of the closing page of the book.

And then he too, as he who spoke before him, having no written word to appeal to, no passage from Holy Writ to quote to the confusion of his friend—for you will not forget that we are far removed in this book from the land and race in which the words of the Old Testament were treasured as the oracles of God—throws himself back upon other authority than his own. He can of course quote no text, and he brings forward no vision of the night as Eliphaz did, but he calls to his aid the accumulated wisdom of earlier ages, the voice of that older, wiser world, which the ephemeral generations of men have so often in their turn invoked. And he tries to overwhelm the restless and presumptuous audacity, as he calls it, of Job, with a hoard of maxims and of metaphors drawn from the storehouse of the 'wisdom of the ancients.' He puts them forward in a form that may remind us for a moment of the Book of Proverbs.

ver. 8-10.

'As the tall bulrush,' it may be the papyrus of the Nile to which the word points, 'or the soaring reed-grass, dies down, faster than it shot up, when water is withdrawn, so falls and withers the short-lived prosperity of the forgetters of their God. The

ver. 10-15.

LECTURE
IV.Chap. viii.
ver. 16-19.

spider's web, frailest of tenements, is the world-old type of the hopes which the ungodly builds. The green climbing plant that strikes its root so deep, feeling its way through the bed of stones (or down to earth's secret springs), and spreads its branches so far in the bright sunlight, and then is destroyed so easily, and leaves its place for other growths of earth, is the type of the *joy*'—we feel the irony of the phrase—'of those who seem for a while so happy, yet perish beneath the righteous touch of a God who reads the heart.'

We seem to be reading verses of some one of the many Psalms that speak in the same tone of the sure retribution that falls on the wicked. Yet his words jar strangely upon our ears, for our thoughts must needs go back to that scene in which God himself had borne testimony, in the very courts of Heaven, to the faithfulness and goodness of 'His servant Job.'

And now he, who, doubtless with the best intentions, is playing the part of the true and plain-spoken but loyal friend, has reached, he thinks, ground on which he may suggest words of hope and cheering. He may once more, without wounding his own conscience, mingle encouragement with exhortation and remonstrance. 'God will never cast away,' he says, 'a perfect man.' 'Be thy true self,' he seems to whisper, 'once again.' 'He will yet *fill thy mouth with laughter, And thy lips with shouting. Thine enemies and the enemies of all the good, will be clothed with shame.*' Once more we hear the voice of some stern Psalmist of old,

*'They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame ;
And the tent of the wicked shall be no more.'*

If you study closely these words of Bildad you will see that the plot of the drama, if I may so speak, is gradually unfolding itself. The second friend is empha-

sising what the first had hinted. We shall hear stronger and clearer language soon. But you may already see the view which is being disclosed more and more nakedly.

‘There are no mysteries at all, no puzzles, in human life,’ the friends say. ‘Suffering is, in each and every case, the consequence of ill doing. God’s righteousness is absolute. It is to be seen at every turn in the experience of life. All this impatient, fretful, writhing under, or at the sight of, pain and loss, is a sign of something morally wrong, of want of faith in Divine justice. Believe this, Job; act on it, and all thy troubles will be over; God will be once more thy friend; till then He cannot be.’

But Job finds no comfort in this teaching. He had not, remember, before him the spectacle of One who bore the sharpest pains in full communion with Him whom He invoked as ‘Abba, Father.’ He is rather the solitary leader of those who were the first to feel and face the mystery of pain. If he was himself the very type and foreshadowing of One who, in a deeper sense than his friends had sounded, was to be ‘stricken and afflicted,’ yet beloved, he had no consciousness of this to support him. And his friends’ solution brings him no anodyne; rather it suggests to his wounded spirit thoughts which bring mere pain, a sharper pain than the worst pangs which rack him. For they gather up, and give shape and form to, his own dark misgiving that God has become his foe.

He answers, in chapter ix, with a touch of irony. ‘Doubtless you are right! Wise are your words! You bid me turn to God, and plead with Him. Vain counsel! How can man, though he feels his innocence, make good his cause before such an adversary? How answer one of the

LECTURE
IV.

Chaps.
viii, ix.

Chap. ix.
ver. 2, 3.

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Chap. ix.

ver. 4-10.

thousand questions which this dread opponent might put?' We are transported, it may be, from Arab tent-life to other scenes and associations. But we see clearly what is more important, how far Job is drifting from his earlier relation to God as his friend. 'God,' he says, 'is, I know it well, wise in heart,' in *understanding*, as we should say, 'and mighty in strength. *Who hath hardened himself against Him and prospered? He removes the mountains, and shakes the earth, and stays the sun, and scaleth up the stars, and spreads out the heavens, and walks the waves of the pathless sea. The bright constellations that illumine the skies of night are his handiwork.*'

He doeth great things past finding out ;

Yea, marvellous things without number.

ver. 11.

He quotes, but in a very different mood, the words of Eliphaz, just as he had turned to a cheerless and darker meaning the glad creation-hymn of the thankful Psalmist¹. 'Yes,' he says, 'God is mighty: but he is far away, and invisible, mysterious and inscrutable. *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; He passeth on also but I perceive Him not.*' He seems for a moment to speak the language of men of our

ver. 13.

own day; but we are carried back in another instant to an early age and some forgotten myth of a 'Rahab' and his 'helpers'; some *Titans*, as it were, or monsters who vainly

ver. 12-16.

braved his power. 'Yes! the mightiest forms of nature are weak before Him; and what am I? Vain for me to plead and reason or dispute with such a Being! However good, however righteous the cause, I dare not answer Him; I could only grovel in supplication, vain supplication, before Him.'

And this thought of God's irresistible power begins to

¹ See above, p. 68.

mingle with the sense of the agonies with which He is torturing his weak creature, and with the conviction, which that creature will not part with, of his own innocence. And the result is terrible. *'He breaketh me with a tempest. He multiplieth my wounds without cause.'* Is it a pious Patriarch, or a Prometheus nailed to a rock for vultures to tear him, whom we hear? And then through a short train of words, unintelligible in our ordinary Bibles, dark, even though less dark, in the original, but charged with the thought—one that *makes him despise or loathe, his life*—that he can have no fair trial before this Dread Being, he passes to a further and more harrowing stage of hoplessness and despair.

Job has spoken already of God as cruel; as Almighty, but no 'Father of all mercies,' as we daily name Him here. But now his wild and rebellious words, which we might have looked on as simply half-articulate moans wrung from a tortured frame, begin to take another and a darker form. This God, so all-powerful, so un pitying and wrathful, is losing in his sight the one attribute which makes mere power an object of reverence or veneration. He is no longer content to question his Mercy: he questions, he denies, His Righteousness. And in awful words, which startled a Jerome¹ in an early age, and drove a Gregory into interpretations which will not bear a moment's calm consideration, he draws nearer and nearer to, seems indeed to tread on the very edge of, that fatal act of blasphemy, that entire and open renunciation of his God, to which Satan pointed as the sure result of the trial which was to be laid upon him. Listen to him.

'It is all one,' he cries, *'all one, guilt or innocence in His sight. Yes! He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the*

¹ *Nihil asperius (in libro)*, says Jerome.

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Chap. ix.

ver. 24.

scourge slay suddenly, when some plague i. e. strikes down mankind, '*He*, the Mighty one, *mocketh at the destruction of the innocent*. Up to His unregarding ears go the appealing cries of the pious, and the fierce curses of the wicked.' And worse remains: 'here below, *the earth is given*,' cries Job, '*into the hand of the wicked*.' We seem to be invited once more to look out beyond this Arab life, beyond those plains of Asia, on a world more like that over which the melancholy musser of Ecclesiastes uttered his dirge of sadness. And he passes, in his sharp paroxysm, even beyond the darkest passage of that mournful book of sighs. For, worse still, *He*, the Lord of all mankind, '*covereth*,' he tells us, '*the faces of the Judges*, veils their eyes, and blinds them to the rights and the wrongs of those whom they are to judge. *If it be not He, who then is it?* He alone is answerable for all earthly wrongs, for mine and for all.'

We hold our breath, brethren—do we not?—as we read or listen to his words. As for those earlier cries of pain, so piercing, so natural, we read in them what Chateaubriand called 'the cry of suffering humanity;' we remember the *Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani*, which went up centuries later, in an awful moment of darkness, from Him who 'bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.' But we have here something, for the faintest trace of which we should turn in vain to Gethsemane or Calvary. It goes beyond the Psalmist's cry, *hath God forgotten to be gracious*¹? 'He is not ungracious only,' says Job, 'but unjust;' and before the sufferer's distempered eye, rise for a moment all the injustices of Eastern life, with God as their author behind them. And this from the lips of Job the Patient!

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 9.

Once more ; ‘ *The earth (whole lands, we are told, is the precise meaning) is given into the hand of the wicked.*’ You, if such there be among us, who sometimes find it hard to reconcile your faith in God with the spectacle, not of the miseries only, but of the moral, the political, the social evils of the world, draw near and see how a Saint of that older world writhed for a moment under the same misgivings. And they will return again to him ; they will come back, I will not say in a darker, but in a more abiding shape. And yet he, he who speaks thus, was dear to the God whose essential attribute he for a moment questioned in his hour of torture.

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IV.

Chap. ix.
ver. 24.

For a moment only, so far. The throb of pain calls him back, as it did the young poet of the last generation, ‘tolls him back again to his sole self.’ ‘His bitter days,’ he cries, ver. 25-31. ‘like the sweetest days of old, are running fast away. *They flee away, they see no good*, fast as the runner who carries the message of victory or defeat, fast as the light reed-skiffs that skim the waters of the mighty Nile ; fast as the swoop of the eagle on its prey. And vain it is to try to put away my looks of sorrow, and smile under my woes. I feel,’ he says, ‘I feel that I must be under thy displeasure.’ See how he yearns toward the God, whom in the same breath he had almost defied. ‘If thou holdest me guilty, why should I toil in vain to justify myself? I may wash myself white as snow ; hold up hands clean from all defilement ; Thou canst plunge me in the filth, till my very garments abhor me. *He is not a man* ver. 32, 33. *as I am, that I should answer Him.* There is no judge, no umpire, no “daysman” betwixt Thee and me ; none who can claim authority over us each and both.’ And the chapter ends with a pathetic appeal that God would remove his rod,

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IV.
—♦—

ease him of his pangs, take away his terrors, and leave him free to assert his innocence.

Chap. ix.

Is there a monotony in these prolonged cries, my friends? You will hardly, I think, find it a wearisome monotony. It is too intensely human to fail to touch a fibre in all our hearts. I need not pause for a moment to point out the boldness, the freedom, the unrestrained force, with which the sacred writer paints the conflict of the soul which feels its innocence, and yet, bred in the faith held so firmly by all around it, that all suffering is a sure mark of God's displeasure, tosses to and fro on its bed of perplexity and pain.

Chap. x.

And now follows a chapter in which that sick soul pleads once more with the God to whom, in spite of all, it cleaves so earnestly. He forgets his friends, and thinks in that awful hour of misery of Him and of Him only.

ver. 1.

My soul is weary of my life ;

I will give free course to my complaint ;

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

It is a tragic chapter, to which these words are the preface. We can hardly wonder at the temptation felt by a great Commentator¹ to strip it of its meaning and reduce it, now to a riddling prophecy of heresies to come, now to safe and feeble and almost common-place counsels of pastoral advice. Let us listen to the real Job, the half-proud, half-humble chief, pouring out a torrent, a volcanic torrent, of tumultuous complaint.

ver. 2-7.

He implores and implores his God to teach him wherein he has offended. 'Surely He cannot be an oppressor; He cannot smile upon the unjust, and frown upon His true

¹ The tenth book of *Sancti Gregorii Magna Moralia* is given entirely to these two chapters.

servant. It cannot be that what I said in my haste is true. LECTURE
IV.

Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress?

That thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands?

—♦—
Chap. x.

Hast thou eyes of flesh?

Must thou torment me like a human Inquisitor to find the truth? *Are thy days as the days of man?* Art thou some short-lived Master who cannot wait to read my heart in my life? And this,

Although thou knowest that I am not wicked;

ver. 7, 8.

And there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.'

And then, in touching accents, he speaks of his Maker, at once his Maker and Destroyer, as having made and fashioned him in the womb, and nursed his frame to strength and growth, and crowned him with life and favour; and all, he asks, for what? to overwhelm him with a fixed unalterable destiny of indiscriminating wrath! ver. 8-15.

If I be wicked, woe unto me:

ver. 15.

And if I be righteous, yet shall I not lift up my head;

'I am to thee,' he goes on, 'like its helpless prey in the fangs of a lion; my very sufferings are a troop of witnesses of thy displeasure, or as a host of foes that leaguer and assault me. Ah! that I had never faced the burden of life, but had been borne in unconsciousness *from the womb to the grave!* And then, broken down as it seems with pain and despair, and dead to all but the sense of a sick man's weariness, *'My days,'* he says, *'are few:* leave me a space of respite and of calm, ere I go hence "from sunshine to the sunless land."' Yet even as he speaks, nature's pulse of life seems to quiver within him once more, and light seems dear and darkness dreary. ver. 16-19.

Before I go whence I shall not return,

ver. 21, 22.

LECTURE

IV.

Chap. x.

Even to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death ;

A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself ;

A land of the shadow of death, without any order,

And where the light is as darkness.

Are those wrong who turn from all attempts to wring from the words a voice of Christian teaching, and are content to speak of what we have read as a tragic chapter, this struggle towards God through wrath and through despair ; ‘through thorns,’ as Luther said of a sad Psalmist, ‘yea, through spears and swords?’

Chap. xi.

But his words did not pierce the heart of the third of his friends who now speaks in answer. He is introduced to us as Zophar of Naamah. He comes to Job from some unknown home, which we can hardly identify, in a work in which all reference to the scenery of the Holy Land is so studiously avoided, with a village of that name¹ in the rich corn-land of the coast of Palestine. He begins in a sharper tone than those who went before him. He is ready at once with taunts and rebukes for what seem to him Job’s idle babble and vaunts of innocence. They do not move him at all. ‘Away,’ he says, ‘with this self-flattery and these profane appeals to God!’

ver. 2-4.

ver. 5, 6.

‘Oh that God would answer thy bold prayers and speak to thee as with human lips ; that He would teach thee, some of the manifold *secrets of a wisdom* that is hidden from thee ! And then, in plain blunt words, he throws aside all mere hints and suggestions, and drives home the dart which the others have only pointed and brandished. ‘*Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.* So far from being unjust and cruel, God has spared thee the full measure of thy deserts.’ He puts forward, that is, for the

¹ Joshua xv. 41.

first time in its naked force, the full and logical conclusion of the creed which he and his friends held as an essential tenet of their faith.

LECTURE
IV.

—♦—
Chap. xi.

It is this. Let us note it carefully once more. Wherever there is suffering, there is sin, real and tangible sin, proportioned to that suffering. God governs this world by rewards and punishments, and those rewards and punishments are distributed here below with an unerring justice. It follows therefore that this Job, this seeming Saint, is really a man of heinous sin.

And having said this to his brother in his pain, and discharged that which Job's words had made, he honestly believes, the duty of others (v. 3), by speaking sharply where sharp words were needed, he points Job to the high and mysterious nature of the God against whom he is in rebellion. '*High*,' he tells him, '*that nature as Heaven*, deep as the deep underworld; it stretches beyond the bounds of earth, and is broader than the broad sea. And his power too is irresistible, and his eye sees at a glance concealed iniquity. How small before Him the wisdom, or rather the ass-like folly and petulance of man.'

Yet even the impetuous Zophar is not introduced as other than one who seeks his friend's best good. He, like his companions, is a man full of religious convictions, and of a genuine, if a narrow, piety. He reads in Job's sufferings, not mere penal pains, but the rod of chastisement. '*Turn*,' he says, '*thy heart, and spread thy hands out to God; put from thee evil; and once more shalt thou lift up thy face, and thy misery shall flow away like a passing stream and be no more remembered.*

And thy life shall be clearer than the noonday :

ver. 17-19.

LECTURE

IV.

Chap. xi.

ver. 14.

ver. 20.

*Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning.**Also thou shalt lie down and none shall make thee afraid.'*

‘Only remember that this can be granted thee on one condition, one only. Put away *iniquity from thy hands, unrighteousness from thy tents*. To the impenitent and to the wicked there is no hope save in the last sigh of death!

Their hope, their only hope, shall be the giving up of the ghost.'

The three friends have now all spoken. Your sympathies perhaps are not wholly on their side. Yet do not let us misjudge them, or assail them with the invectives which Christian writers hurled against them for centuries. Do not say, as has been said by the great Gregory, to whom England owes a debt of measureless gratitude, that these three men are types of God's worst enemies, or that they scarcely speak a word of good, except what they have learned from Job. Is it not rather true that their words, taken by themselves, are far more devout, far more fit for the lips of pious, we may even say, of Christian men, than those of Job? Do they not represent that large number of good and God-fearing men and women, who do not feel moved or disturbed by the perplexities of life; and who resent as shallow, or as mischievous, the doubts to which those perplexities give rise in the minds of others, of the much afflicted, or the perplexed, or of persons reared in another school than their own, or touched by influences which have never reached themselves? So Job's friends try in their own way 'to justify the ways of God to man'—a noble endeavour; and in doing this, they have already said much which is not only true, but also most valuable. They have pleaded in their behalf the teaching, if I may so speak, of their Church, the teaching handed down from antiquity,

and the experience of God's people. They have a firm belief, not only in God's power, but in his unerring righteousness. They hold also the precious truth that He is a God who will forgive the sinner, and take back to his favour him who bears rightly the teaching of affliction. Surely, so far, a very grand and simple creed. We shall watch their language narrowly, and we shall still find in it much to admire, much with which to sympathise, much to treasure and use as a storehouse of Christian thought. We shall see also where and how it is that they misapplied the most precious of truths and the most edifying of doctrines; turned wholesome food to poison; pressed upon their friend those half-truths, which are sometimes the worst of untruths. We shall note also no less that want of true sympathy, of the faculty of entering into the feelings of men unlike themselves, and of the power of facing new views or new truths, which has so often in the history of the church marred the character, and impaired the usefulness, of some of God's truest servants. We shall see them lastly, in the true spirit of the controversialist, grow more and more embittered by the persistency in error, as they hold it, of him who opposes them.

Job's doubts, Job's questionings, Job's wavering faith, that fire that, if unquenchable, yet burns at times so low, will all be to them sure signs of moral evil. They will have no scruple in bruising the broken reed, in quenching the smoking flax! Shocked at what seems to them his failure in faith, these men, devout men, as their language proves, orthodox men, as their agreement with each other and their appeals to antiquity are obviously meant to represent them, will close round the poor solitary heretic of their day, and

LECTURE

IV.

Chap. xi.

utter, in season and out of season, the truths which they hold dear. They will never pause to ask whether these truths are the teaching and the help needed by the soul which they fain would save. The problem which his own bitter sufferings has forced upon the unhappy Job, they will only answer by denying its existence; and they will think they are doing God service by trying to win him, by spiritual terrors or spiritual bribes, to abandon that one truth of which he is so rightly and so firmly convinced—that this storm of suffering is not, and cannot be, a proof of the just anger of a righteous God; that his ancient and life-long standing towards his Divine Friend was no idle figment, but a solid fact. *He* feels out wildly for a solution, and *they* ply him with a round of doctrines and truths which bring his starving soul no nourishment, no light to his darkened vision. And by a strange fatality, these three friends, the unflinching champions, in their own age, of the traditional and orthodox creed of their day, figure in the great work of one of the very greatest of early leaders of the Church, as the types of those heretics who were to threaten with destruction the very Church of God!

Into the further developments of their teaching, its true side and its false side, and into its effect on the mind of Job, we shall enter, when next we meet to turn the pages of this sacred drama of that far-off age. But its true subject is already—is it not so?—unveiling itself before our eyes.

Has he who serves God a right to claim exemption from pain and suffering? Is such pain a mark of God's displeasure, or may it be something exceedingly different? Must God's children in their hour of trial have their thoughts turned to the judgment that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah,

or shall they fix them on 'the agony and bloody sweat' of Him Whose coming in the flesh we so soon commemorate? LECTURE
IV.

♦♦
Chap. xi.

The strong and masculine spirit of Gregory disengages itself at times from the system of interpretation which he lays down for himself, and strongly as he speaks of the almost infallibility of the 'blessed,' i.e. the saintly, Job, and the errors of his friends, he yet uses language which is well worth quoting:—'Not that in all which they (the friends) say they are devoid of understanding in knowledge of the truth, but for the most part they blend what is wise with what is foolish, and the true with the false.' . . . 'Hence, too, what the friends of the blessed Job utter is at one time worthy of contempt and at another deserves admiration.'—Bk. XI. Cap. 1. So still more strongly in Bk. XV. Cap. 1, 2: 'The friends of the blessed Job could never have been bad men.' . . . 'Though, instructed by habituation to his (Job's) life, they knew how to live well, yet, being uninstructed to form an exact estimate of God's judgment, they did not believe it possible that *any one of the righteous can be susceptible of sufferings here below. Hence they imagined that holy man, whom they saw scourged, to be wicked.*' Indeed, it is rather, as is natural, in his interpretation of Job's words, than in his comments on the language of his friends, that we feel startled by the apparently entire misapprehension of the real problem of the book and of the character of Job, in which he leads the way.

Dec. 5, 1885.

LECTURE V.

CHAPTERS XII—XV.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPTERS XII—XV.)

CHAPTER XII.



- 12 Then Job answered and said,
2 No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
3 But I have understanding as well as you ;
I am not inferior to you :
Yea, who knoweth not such things as these ?
4 I am as one that is a laughing-stock to his neighbour,
A man that called upon God, and he answered him :
The just, the perfect man is a laughing-stock.
5 In the thought of him that is at ease there is contempt for
misfortune ;
It is ready for them whose foot slippeth.
6 The tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure ;
1 Into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.
7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee ;
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee :
8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee ;
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
9 Who knoweth not ² in all these,
That the hand of the LORD hath wrought this ?
10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the ³breath of all mankind.
11 Doth not the ear try words,
Even as the palate tasteth its meat ?
12 ⁴With aged men is wisdom,
And in length of days understanding.
13 With him is wisdom and might ;

¹ Or, *That
bring their
god in their
hand*

² Or, *by*

³ Or, *spirit*

⁴ Or, *With
aged men,
ye say, is
wisdom*

CHAPTER	He hath counsel and understanding.	
XII.	Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again ;	14
—♦—	He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.	
	Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up ;	15
	Again, he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.	
¹ Or, <i>sound wisdom</i>	With him is strength and ¹ effectual working ;	16
	The deceived and the deceiver are his.	
	He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,	17
	And judges maketh he fools.	
	He looseth the bond of kings,	18
	And bindeth their loins with a girdle.	
	He leadeth priests away spoiled,	19
	And overthroweth the mighty.	
	He removeth the speech of the trusty,	20
	And taketh away the understanding of the elders.	
	He poureth contempt upon princes,	21
	And looseth the belt of the strong.	
	He discovereth deep things out of darkness,	22
	And bringeth out to light the shadow of death.	
	He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them :	23
² Or, <i>leadeth them away</i>	He spreadeth the nations abroad, and ² bringeth them in.	
³ Or, <i>land</i>	He taketh away the heart of the chiefs of the people of the ³ earth,	24
	And causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.	
	They grope in the dark without light,	25
⁴ Heb. <i>wander.</i>	And he maketh them to ⁴ stagger like a drunken man.	
	Lo, mine eye hath seen all <i>this</i> ,	13
	Mine ear hath heard and understood it.	
	What ye know, <i>the same</i> do I know also :	2
	I am not inferior unto you.	
	Surely I would speak to the Almighty,	3
	And I desire to reason with God.	
	But ye are forgers of lies,	4
	Ye are all physicians of no value.	
	Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace !	5
	And it should be your wisdom.	

CHAPTER
XIII.



- 6 Hear now my reasoning,
And hearken to the pleadings of my lips.
- 7 Will ye speak unrighteously for God,
And talk deceitfully for him?
- 8 Will ye ¹respect his person?
Will ye contend for God?
- 9 Is it good that he should search you out?
Or as one ²deceiveth a man, will ye ³deceive him?
- 10 He will surely reprove you,
If ye do secretly ⁴respect persons.
- 11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid,
And his dread fall upon you?
- 12 Your memorable sayings *are* proverbs of ashes,
Your defences *are* defences of clay.
- 13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak,
And let come on me what will.
- 14 ⁵Wherefore should I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in mine hand?
- 15 ⁶Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him:
Nevertheless I will ⁷maintain my ways before him.
- 16 ⁸This also shall be my salvation;
⁹For a godless man shall not come before him.
- 17 Hear diligently my speech,
And let my declaration be in your ears.
- 18 Behold now, I have ordered my cause;
I know that I ¹⁰am righteous.
- 19 Who is he that will contend with me?
For now ¹¹shall I hold my peace and give up the ghost.
- 20 Only do not two things unto me,
Then will I not hide myself from thy face:
- 21 Withdraw thine hand far from me;
And let not thy terror make me afraid.
- 22 Then call thou, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, and answer thou me.
- 23 How many are mine iniquities and sins?
Make me to know my transgression and my sin.
- 24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face,

¹ Or, *shew*
him favour

² Or,
mocketh

³ Or, *mock*

⁴ Or, *shew*
favour

⁵ Or, *At all*
adventures
I will
take &c.

⁶ Or,
Behold he
will slay
me; I wait
for him or,
according
to another
reading, *I*
will not
wait or, I
have no
hope

⁷ Heb.
argue.

⁸ Or, *He*

⁹ Or, *That*

¹⁰ Or, *shall*
be justified

¹¹ Or, *if I*
hold my
peace, I
shall give
up &c.

CHAPTER	And holdest me for thine enemy?	
XIII.	Wilt thou harass a driven leaf?	25
—♦—	And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?	
	For thou writest bitter things against me,	26
	And makest me to inherit the iniquities of my youth :	
	Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and markest all my	27
	paths ;	
	Thou drawest thee a line about the soles of my feet :	
¹ Heb. <i>And he is like.</i>	¹ Though I am like a rotten thing that consumeth,	28
	Like a garment that is moth-eaten.	
	Man that is born of a woman	14
	Is of few days, and full of trouble.	
² Or,	He cometh forth like a flower, and ² is cut down :	2
<i>withereth</i>	He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.	
	And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,	3
	And bringest me into judgement with thee ?	
³ Or, <i>Oh that a clean thing could come out of an unclean ! not one can</i>	³ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one.	4
	Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is	5
	with thee,	
	And thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass ;	
	Look away from him, that he may ⁴ rest,	6
⁴ Heb. <i>cease.</i>	Till he shall ⁵ accomplish, as an hireling, his day.	
⁵ Or, <i>have pleasure in</i>	For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will	7
	sprout again,	
	And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.	
	Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,	8
	And the stock thereof die in the ground ;	
	Yet through the scent of water it will bud,	9
	And put forth boughs like a plant.	
⁶ Or, <i>lieth low</i>	But man dieth, and ⁶ wasteth away :	10
	Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?	
⁷ See Is. xix. 5.	⁷ As the waters ⁸ fail from the sea,	11
	And the river decayeth and drieth up ;	
⁸ Heb. <i>are gone.</i>	So man lieth down and riseth not :	12
	Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,	
	Nor be roused out of their sleep.	
⁹ Or, <i>the grave</i>	Oh that thou wouldest hide me in ⁹ Sheol,	13

- That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, CHAPTER
That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! XIV.
-
- 14 If a man die, shall he live *again*?
All the days of my warfare ¹ would I wait,
Till my ² release should come.
- 15 ³ Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee:
Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thine hands.
- 16 But now thou numberest my steps:
Dost thou not watch over my sin?
- 17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And thou fastenest up mine iniquity.
- 18 And surely the mountain falling ⁴ cometh to nought,
And the rock is removed out of its place;
- 19 The waters wear the stones;
The overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth:
And thou destroyest the hope of man.
- 20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth;
Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.
- 21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not;
And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.
- 22 ⁵ But his flesh upon him hath pain,
And his soul within him mourneth.
- 15 Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
2 Should a wise man make answer with ⁶ vain knowledge,
And fill his belly with the east wind?
- 3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk,
Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?
- 4 Yea, thou doest away with fear,
And ⁷ restrainest ⁸ devotion before God.
- 5 For ⁹ thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth,
And thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.
- 6 Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I;
Yea, thine own lips testify against thee.
- 7 Art thou the first man that was born?
Or wast thou brought forth before the hills?
- 8 ¹⁰ Hast thou heard the secret counsel of God?
And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?
- ¹ Or, *will*
... shall
come
- ² Or,
change
- ³ Or, *Thou*
shalt call,
and I will
&c.
- ⁴ Heb.
fadeth
away.
- ⁵ Or, *Only*
for himself
his flesh
hath pain,
and for
himself his
soul
mourneth
- ⁶ Heb.
knowledge
of wind.
- ⁷ Heb. *di-*
minishest.
- ⁸ Or,
meditation
- ⁹ Or, *thy*
mouth
teacheth
thine
iniquity
- ¹⁰ Or, *Dost*
thou
hearken in
the council

CHAPTER	What knowest thou, that we know not?	9
XV.	What understandest thou, which is not in us?	
—♦—	With us are both the grayheaded and the very aged men, Much elder than thy father.	10
	Are the consolations of God too small for thee,	11
¹ Or, <i>Or, is there any secret thing with thee?</i>	¹ And the word <i>that dealeth</i> gently with thee?	
	Why doth thine heart carry thee away?	12
	And why do thine eyes wink?	
	That thou turnest thy spirit against God, And lettest <i>such</i> words go out of thy mouth.	13
	What is man, that he should be clean?	14
	And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?	
	Behold, he putteth no trust in his holy ones ;	15
	Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.	
² Or, <i>that which is</i>	How much less ² one that is abominable and corrupt,	16
	A man that drinketh iniquity like water !	
	I will shew thee, hear thou me ;	17
	And that which I have seen I will declare :	
	(Which wise men have told	18
	From their fathers, and have not hid it ;	
	Unto whom alone the land was given,	19
	And no stranger passed among them :)	
	The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days,	20
³ Or, <i>And years that are numbered are laid up &c.</i>	³ Even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor.	
	A sound of terrors is in his ears ;	21
	In prosperity the spoiler shall come upon him :	
	He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness,	22
	And he is waited for of the sword :	
	He wandereth abroad for bread, <i>saying</i> , Where is it ?	23
	He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand :	
	Distress and anguish make him afraid ;	24
	They prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle :	
	Because he hath stretched out his hand against God,	25
⁴ Or, <i>biddeth defiance to</i>	And ⁴ behaveth himself proudly against the Almighty ;	
	He runneth upon him with a <i>stiff</i> neck,	26
⁵ Or, <i>Upon</i>	⁵ With the thick bosses of his bucklers :	
	Because he hath covered his face with his fatness,	27

- And made collops of fat on his flanks ;
 28 And he hath dwelt in ¹ desolate cities,
 In houses which no man ² inhabited,
 Which were ready to become heaps.
 29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue,
 Neither shall ³ their produce bend to the earth.
 30 He shall not depart out of darkness ;
 The flame shall dry up his branches,
 And by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.
 31 Let him not trust in vanity, deceiving himself :
 For vanity shall be his recompence.
 32 It shall be ⁴ accomplished before his time,
 And his branch shall not be green.
 33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,
 And shall cast off his flower as the olive.
 34 For the company of the godless shall be barren,
 And fire shall consume the tents of bribery.
 35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity,
 And their belly prepareth deceit.

CHAPTER
XV.

¹ Heb. *cut off*.

² Or, *would inhabit*

³ Or, *their possessions be extended on the earth*

⁴ Or, *paid in full*

LECTURE V.

CHAPTERS XII—XV.

WE have gone thus far very carefully and continuously, not I hope too minutely, though the first part of the dialogue between Job and his three friends. The first Act of the Drama, if we care to use the term, has passed before us. Job has spoken thrice; each also of the three has spoken; and I have endeavoured, at the risk of taxing unduly your attention, to set aside all merely allegorising interpretations, and to put before you the simple and actual meaning of the words of each. I have made it my one aim to assist you to take your places, so far as possible, among the bystanders, and to listen alike to their language and to his.

You will remember that with the speech of the third of those who address Job, we have reached a point at which all forms of circumlocution, all mere indirect hints and suggestions, are being laid aside. The naked truth, as it seems to the speaker, is being pressed home upon him. His sufferings, he is told, are the just, and not even excessive chastisement of some real and actual, if as yet undefined sin. His only hope of restoration lies, he has also been plainly told, in putting away evil and turning humbly to a God, if of absolute righteousness, yet even towards His erring servants of unbounded mercy.

What has been so far, what will be, the effect of this on him to whom they speak? Alas! it has been, and it will be

LECTURE
V.
—♦♦—
Chap. xii.

LECTURE V. the very opposite to that which his well-meaning friends would have desired. We shall see this even more clearly to-day.

Chap. xii. The whole world, Job feels, is against him, and he is left forlorn and solitary, unpitied in his misery, unguided in his perplexity. And he may well feel so. All the religious thought of his day, all the traditions of the past, all the wisdom of that Patriarchal Church, if I may use, as I surely may, the expression, is on one side. He, that solitary sufferer and doubter is on the other; and this is not all, or the worst.

His own habits of thought, his own training, are arrayed against him. He had been nursed, it is abundantly clear, in the same creed as these who feel forced to play the part of his spiritual advisers. The new and terrible experience of this crushing affliction, of this appalling visitation, falling upon one who had passed his life in the devout service of God, strikes at the very foundation of the faith on which that life, so peaceful, so pious, and so blessed, as it has been put before us in the Prologue to the Tragedy, has been based and built up. All seems against him; his friends, his God, his pains and anguish, his own tumultuous thoughts; all but one voice within which will not be silenced or coerced. How easy for him, had he been reared in a heathen creed, to say, 'my past life *must* have been a delusion; my conscience has borne me false witness. I did justice, I loved mercy, I walked humbly with my God. But I must in some way, I know not how, have offended a capricious and arbitrary, but an all-powerful and remorseless Being. I will allow with you that that life was all vitiated by some act of omission or of commission of which I know nothing. Him therefore who has sent his Furies to plague me I will now try to propitiate.' But no! he will not come before his God, a God of right-

eousness, holiness, and truth, with a lie on his lips. And so he now stands stubbornly at bay, and in the twelfth and two following chapters, he bursts forth afresh with a strain of scorn and upbraiding that dies away into despair, as he turns from his human tormentors, once his friends, to the God who seems like them, to have become his foe, but to whom he clings with an indomitable tenacity. 'Ah!' he breaks forth in natural impatience, '*ye doubtless are the people, ye represent the voice of all the wise, and wisdom will die out with you. But I too have understanding. Yes,*' cries this bold asserter before his time of the rights of the individual conscience, '*I too, I your laughing-stock,*' he says bitterly, '*have understanding, even though you, after the hard world's way (how old the thought) see with calmness the wicked thrive, and turn with scorn upon the innocent, as he slips down on life's stony high-way. Yes, it is a hard and puzzling world. The unfortunate, the defeated are always in the wrong! The successful are always in the right.'*

LECTURE
V.

Chap. xii.

ver. 2.

ver. 3.

ver. 4.

ver. 5.

*In the thought of him that is at ease there is contempt for
misfortune,*

It, (contempt) is ready for him whose foot slippeth.

The tents of robbers prosper ¹,

ver. 6.

And they that provoke God are secure;

'But I *who called on God, and he answered me*, lie here wrecked and mocked, am tortured and scourged. You need not

¹ Any reader who would take the trouble to turn to the comments of the great Gregory, well as he deserves the name, on this passage (Bk. xi. 3), would see at once the impassable gulf that separates his mode of treatment of the Old Testament from all modern—may I not say all reasonable?—exegesis. There is not a hint that Job is really questioning God's moral government. 'That which robbers do con-

LECTURE
V.Chap. xii.
ver. 7, 8.

speak to me,' he says, 'of God's power. All creation tells me that,' and he glances for a moment at the witness which beast and bird, and all life in sea or land, bear to his Creator's omnipotence. On the light which that study throws on His character, on His care for, or His indifference to, those His creatures, that thinker of the early world is dumb. He says nothing here either of the cheering or the cheerless side of the teaching of that spectacle of the whole realm of life, which filled a Psalmist's heart with joy, which has been to some men the very mainstay of their faith, but which has produced such opposite effects on those who have read the book of nature from its darker side; who have looked rather at the pain and struggle, the mutual destruction, the sacrifice of the weak, which mark its pages.

Yes, God's *power* he knows, knows only too well. The Jehovah, whom for the first time since the dialogue began, he names by that title of the Hebrew Covenant, is Lord of all.

ver. 9, 10.

'*Who knoweth not,*' he says, '*in (or by) all these, That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?*' wrought all this visible order which lies before us.' 'He too has listened to the wisdom of his elders with an

trary to right, the Equal Dispenser no otherwise than justly permits to be done by them, that both he who is allowed to rob, being blinded in mind may increase his guilt, and that he who suffers from his robbery may now in the mischief thereof be chastised for some sin of which he had been guilty before.' Indeed, it is not too much to say that so entirely is the moral problem of the book passed over that the great Pope ranges himself, quite as it would seem unconsciously, in the ranks of Job's friends, and compels Job again and again to utter essentially the same views as they do. In the words that follow it is interesting to notice that *the beasts* of ver. 7 are interpreted 'as the men of slow parts,' *the fowls of the air* as those 'that are skilled in high and sublime truths.' He adds however here a remark that the verse may be understood to good purpose even in its literal sense.

ear that can appreciate and discriminate their teaching. LECTURE
He too has seen God's power. He has read it as V.
revealed in the more terrible phenomena of nature; Chap. xii.
in the dreary drought, in the destroying flood. He has ver. 14-16.
read it also in the dark page of history, that tremendous power, so terrible, so irresistible, that extends alike over folly and wisdom, over the dupe and his deceiver.' And here for a moment, we look eagerly, but look in vain, for some touch or word that shall disclose the secret of the age to which the mysterious book we read belongs. 'He has seen,' he says, or seems to say, 'Empires overthrown, the ver. 17-19.
trusted counsellors of courts, the judges of nations, fall from their high estate; kings exchange their royal girdle for the cord that encircles each of the captive horde; priests led away stripped of their priestly robes. He has seen power and ver. 20-22.
eloquence and wisdom, and princely state and strength, and counsels secret as the very shadow of death, prove unavailing.'

'And he has seen nations spread out their swarms and en- ver. 23.
large their borders and then pass into insignificance. And finally he has seen their chiefs and leaders, giddy with the ver. 24, 25.
infatuation of self-confidence, and drunken with success, stagger and wander into the policy of madmen.'

They grope in the darkness without light,

And he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

At what point in human history is this, its weary watcher, looking back upon its course? Is it from the narrow and simple experience of the Patriarchal tent? Or from that of a civilised and settled community that has come into collision with great Eastern Empires? Or from that of a nation still reeling with a shock of ruin? We ask, and ask in vain. Human history from its dawn to to-day, even in what

LECTURE we call the 'unchanging East,' is the history of change,
 V. vicissitude, decay, and growth.

Chap. xiii. 'All this,' he says, as we turn to the next, the 13th chapter,
 ver. 1, 2. 'he knows as well as his vain consolers. They can teach him
 nothing new. All that they can say sheds no light on the
 mystery that torments him. How is he to connect, how
 reconcile, his own sad experience with the secret counsels of
 God's righteousness? It is to Him, to this Being, the sense of
 whose awful and illimitable power brings no consolation, only
 ver. 3. misery, to Him, not to them, that he would turn.' They are,
 as he says, and says surely not without some reason, pleading
 unfairly for God, '*respecting His person*,' as he dares to say,
 ver. 7, 8. justifying what shocks the human conscience by simply
 dwelling on his power; trying to force the sufferer to accept
 what no force on earth can win him to believe. 'Surely to
 ver. 4. me *ye are*, one and all, *Physicians of no value*, and as regards
 God, *forgers of lies*. How vain your hopes that you can
 please a God of truth by these false pleadings, by these
 ver. 10. *proverbs*,' he says, 'these moral maxims, *of ashes*, these
 ver. 12. *defences of clay*.' 'Beware,' he adds, 'lest a God of truth,
 —see how the half-blasphemer of yesterday clings to the
 idea that God must needs be this—'beware lest He visit you
 with his sore displeasure.'

ver. 9. *As one deceiveth a man, will ye deceive Him?*

ver. 11. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid,
 And his dread fall upon you?*

And then, almost Titan-like, Prometheus-like, in his boldness,
 yet with a sacred courage which makes our hearts thrill with
 sympathy, he bids them stand aside.

ver. 13, 14. '*Let come on me what will*, I will speak, even though,'
 he adds, in words as obscure to us as they are forcible,

'I take my flesh in my teeth, though I put my life in my hand.' LECTURE V.

I had intended, my friends, to put before you a far shorter summary of these words. I have found their interest so intense, the crisis of Job's mental conflict so pathetic, so instructive, that I dare not compress its details more closely. And see what follows. In words that must take the place of an ancient, a venerable and dearly prized, but, I fear, erroneous rendering of his thoughts, he continues; *'Though He slay me, though He strike me down, will I yet wait for Him and hear His sentence. I will make my way into that awful presence where no mortal can stand and live, but where Eternal Justice must find its truest shrine. Whatever comes, I will maintain my ways, I will plead my cause, the cause of my conscience, before Him.'* Chap. xiii.

'And surely,' he whispers with a noble trustfulness, *'this shall be my salvation, no hypocrite dare stand before that awful bar.'* ver. 15.

And then, wound up to the highest pitch by the thought that he is already standing there, he calls passionately on all around to listen to his words. *'Let them ring,'* he cries, *'in your ears'* He knows that he will gain his cause. Shall the judge of all the earth do wrong? *'Who will plead against me?' Could any arise and confute me. I would be content to be silent and die unacquitted.'* ver. 16.

But as he speaks, and no answer comes out of the infinite silence, the high-strung spirit begins to droop, and his pains and weakness once more assert their power to unnerve his soul. *'Do Thou,'* he cries, *'Great Being, withdraw Thy heavy hand; rack me not with these pains; cow not my soul with these haunting terrors; let me breathe freely for one moment.'* ver. 17-19.

Then call thou, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, and answer thou me. ver. 22.

LECTURE *How many are my iniquities and sins?*

V. *Make me to know my transgression and my sin.*

Chap. xiii. And as still no answer comes, his unfriended and solitary
ver. 23. spirit shrinks back into its tenement of pain, and he cries,
and cries in piteous accents :

ver. 24. *'Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And holdest me for thine enemy?*

ver. 25. *Wilt thou harass a driven leaf?
And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?*

ver. 26. *For thou writest bitter things against me,
And makest me to inherit the iniquities of my youth.*

Canst Thou be scourging me for some unremembered sin of
unconscious youth? Why dost Thou thus keep me as a
ver. 27, 28. prisoner for my doom, marking round my feet a circle which
I cannot pass, and within which my captive life moulders
steadily away, like a garment fretted by the moth?'

But it is all in vain ; no answer reaches him. And as the
spirit that had risen so high sinks down, blinded and dizzied,
paralysed and overwhelmed—sinks down into the very
deepest depths of unutterable despair, he pours forth in the
following chapter a mournful elegy over the sadness and
frailty of human life. We know some of us right well
the words ; may we never be suffered to taste the full
sense of desolation out of which they first took their rise.

Chap. xiv. *'Man that is born of a woman*

ver. 1. *Is of few days, and full of trouble.*

ver. 2. *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down :
He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

Sad and unrestful his days, and short and soon forgotten his
ver. 3, 4. life !' 'And canst Thou,' he cries, in a changed mood from
the fearless guise which he wore just now, 'canst Thou enter

into judgment with one so feeble? Canst Thou look for perfection in one so imperfect? Surely Thou, who hast fixed so narrowly the limits of his days and strength, who hast set him to walk in a vain shadow and disquiet himself in vain, might but let him rest till the short swift day of life's toil is over, and the night comes on that knows no morn.'

LECTURE
V.
—♦—
Chap. xiv.

And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, ver. 3-6.

And bringest me into judgment with thee?

*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.
Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months
is with thee,*

*And thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;
Look away from him that he may rest,*

Till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

And then, in words of solemn and mournful hopelessness, that have their echoes in the sad poetry of every age and every nation under heaven, he paints the frailty of life and the sad finality of Death.

*There is hope for a tree, if it be cut down that it will
sprout again,* ver. 7.

And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, ver. 8.

And the stock thereof die in the ground;

Yet through the scent of water it will bud. ver. 9.

Through (at) the scent of water—how natural the language in one familiar with the vivifying touch of rain in the sun-parched East—

It will bud and put forth boughs like a (young) plant.

But man dieth, and wasteth away:

ver. 10-12.

Yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

Yea, as the waters fail, in some inland sea, or sea-like mere,

LECTURE

V.

Chap. xiv.

ver. 12.

*As the river decayeth and drieth up ;**So man lieth down and riseth not :**Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,**Nor be roused out of their sleep.*

It is a world-old lamentation, that has echoed from East to West, from the dawn of poetry to our own day.

Yes! we are in presence of a gloomy thought, my friends. Death, it tells us, ends all active life, all true consciousness; ends it for ever and for ever. And it is here before us in all its oppressive darkness; *till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake*. Do not let us mis-read lines which surely tell their own sad story; or try to wring from them some fictitious anticipation of a revelation made in Christ of Life and Immortality; or listen to those who have found in their sad tones a veiled and riddling assertion of the glorious resurrection from the dead¹. Yet in this his darkest hour there flashes out of his very gloom a momentary brightness. 'Can it be that God would let one who had once been in such close communion with Himself, pass away under his anger, pass away for ever and for ever? Ah! that for a while He would hide his servant in the dark underworld of the dead.'—

ver. 13.

*Oh ! that thou wouldst hide me in that world,**That thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past—*

ver. 14.

'and then, when the appointed time was come, would call him, were it but possible, from that dreary prison. How gladly,' he cries, 'would I wait through that gloomy time.'

¹ *Ergo resurget*, says Brentius, at the epoch of the Reformation, on the 12th verse. The whole passage is, as a matter of course, interpreted by Gregory as a mere assertion of the doctrine of the Resurrection.

Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee :

Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thine hands.

How pathetic, how moving, the appeal ! How strong the yearning of that soul not for mere life, but for its true life, reconciliation to its God, to Him who 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' But no ! it is only a passing gleam of hope. His dark hour returns. 'God is watching him as a criminal; *numbering his steps* as he moves forwards to his doom, *sealing up* and treasuring the secret record of his unconscious offences !' And then, in cold despair, he turns to his Maker, and sees in Him, as others have seen, the dispenser not of universal life, but universal death. He is no longer the great Creator, but the great Destroyer.

Surely, he says, the mountain falleth and fadeth away, ver. 18, 19.

The waters wear the stones !

If the words are those of the ancient Patriarch, the thoughts are those of the modern man of science, of the geologist, shall we say, who looking back through immeasurable æons to types of a far-off life, long extinct—to upheaved mountains, and vanished continents—smiles at such phrases as the 'everlasting hills,' and the 'changeless sea.' Inanimate Nature, says already this dismal voice out of the old world, tells everywhere the same tale. Decay and destruction are the laws that rule the universe ; 'I bring to life, I bring to death.' And then, turning once more from the book of nature to the fate of man.

Thou destroyest, he adds, the hope of man.

Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth ; ver. 20.

Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

'Decay's effacing fingers' put the seal upon his doom.

His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not ; ver. 21.

And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

LECTURE
V.

Chap. xiv.
ver. 15.

ver. 16.

ver. 17.

LECTURE V.
 Chap. xiv.
 ver. 22.

‘All his interest in life is gone. All that can be left him,’ he seems to cry in the last verse, ‘is some dull sense of decay and pain as his poor flesh passes mutely into dust!’ We have reached—have we not—the very deepest dungeon of the Castle of Despair? Job stands face to face with ‘the veil that is spread over all nations,’ and the doom that hangs over all life. And he sees no hope. In vain do we attempt to read his language backwards, or follow the steps of expositors, who find in tones of despair the voice of hope and certainty, *All thy works praise Thee, O Lord*, says the Psalmist, *Thou givest life unto all flesh!* ‘All thy works pass away,’ says our sad Patriarch, ‘and thou regardest it not.’ ‘Life’s swift shortness, Life’s awful changes, are alike unpitied, unregarded.’ Yet one other thought, linked closely with this, but darker still, the very darkest of all his thoughts, has not yet taken full possession of his soul. It has passed before¹ him, and has gone; we shall see it revisit him ere long.

Chap. xv.
 ver. 2, 3.

And now, before we part, let us turn from these awful cries of despairing humanity, and let us listen again to the eldest of his friends, the Eliphaz who spoke so softly and gently when we heard him first. Even he throws aside in Chapter xv. the delicate reserve and tenderness for his friend that marked his earlier mood. He speaks sharply and severely; he doubtless feels it his duty to do so. I will summarise his language very briefly. He accuses Job, not only as his friends had done, of wild and random utterances, of *filling*, as he puts it, his breast *with the east wind*, but of having struck by his impious language at the very root of all piety and all prayer.

ver. 4.

*Thou doest away with fear,
 And restrainest devotion before God.*

¹ Chap. ix. 22–24; xii. 6.

Job's own words have, he tells him, shown that what his friends had hinted was all too true. 'Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.' And Job's words seem to him quite enough to prove his guilt and justify his sufferings. He taunts him with his presumption in venturing to put his own private judgment against the universal voice, the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, of those early times; to question dogmas which were so firmly rooted in the convictions of his religious friends, and held by them in common with

LECTURE

V.

Chap. xv.

ver. 5-10.

Gray-headed and very aged men,

ver. 10.

Much elder than thy father.

It is an old taunt, my friends, that which passes in various forms from the lips of Job's ancient counsellor, stung to anger by the audacity of his friend. He accuses him, I need hardly say, of self-sufficiency and pride, in wandering from 'the old paths,' and of petulance in rejecting the '*consolations of God*,' so he styles them, which they had so gently put before him. But still more he is shocked by Job's impatient and indignant outcries; and most of all by his assertions of innocence. The good Eliphaz, for so I venture to call him, confounds Job's outspoken, persistent, and clamorous cry, that he has done nothing to bring down on his head these terrible blows, with what is quite different, an assertion of sinlessness and perfection which Job has never for one moment made. And he dwells therefore, in language which those who have lived under Christian influences will welcome with all their souls, on the sense of inborn weakness and sinfulness with which man should come before Him Who

ver. 11.

ver. 12-14.

Putteth, he says, *no trust in his angels*, findeth imperfection even in them; '*Yea*,' he adds,

The heavens are not clean in his sight.

ver. 15.

LECTURE
V.

Chap. xv.

ver. 16.

True enough, we feel, as we read his words. It was easy then to rebuke Job for his tempestuous language. It is easy for us, who have in our consciences the result of nineteen centuries of Christian teaching, to echo his language as to human sinfulness. But it was hard to convince Job, and it is hard to convince us, that that fair and dutiful life had been based on guilt and hypocrisy; that all this misery was the well-deserved, well-measured requital of a life that was a lie. And then having sternly rebuked his friend, he goes on to set before his eyes a picture that shall confute Job's passionate cry, that the world is misruled, that the innocent are afflicted and mocked;

*While the tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure¹.*

ver. 17-19.

The teaching that he sets before him, is, he tells him, no mere optimistic imagination of his own. It is drawn from the treasures of the unalloyed and venerable traditions of their race—handed down through generations from those *to whom the land was given*, the true and ancient Lords of the soil; no idle tale borrowed from the loose fancy of some travelling stranger, or born of admixture with some baser race. The teaching for which this consensus, as it were, of Catholic antiquity, is claimed so loudly, is this. It is, you will remember, that which the three friends, have, each in turn, put forth as the central truth which it is their duty to defend and uphold. For it is the basis and foundation on which their view of God's character and

ver. 20.

of the government of the world reposes. '*The wicked cannot be prosperous: God's Providence measures out certain retribution.*' He gives to every man, between the cradle and the grave, that which he deserves. This, remember, is the cardinal position which the friends, representing the unanimous voice of

¹ xii. 6.

good men of their day, are bound to maintain, and round which they rally all their forces to meet Job's impetuous onsets. This it is which Job has dared to impugn. The present visible order of things is, they say, perfectly just; Job says, that it is unjust. And to prove the point, the speaker draws two pictures. The first, dimmed by age, but yet, if I read aright, a very striking one, is perhaps the oldest in the world, of the agonies of a guilty conscience haunting successful crime, even in the high tide of outward success.

LECTURE
V.
—♦♦—
Chap. xv.

The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, ver. 20, 21.

Even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor.

A sound of terrors is in his ears;

‘The phantom of an unknown spoiler flits before the spoiler of men. Each passing cloud of darkness breeds despair: he sees a ghostly sword waiting for him in the shadow.’

He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, ver. 22.

And he is waited for of the sword:

‘while surrounded by riches, he pictures himself seeking in vain for bread; and in the full light of success, he sees the black *day of darkness*, as it were but a step removed. And terrible images of *distress and anguish* beset his soul. The horrors of conscience *prevail against him*, like the embattled host of a *king ready for the battle*.’ And then in a second picture, through image after image, drawn in turn from the human, the animal, and the vegetable world, he dwells alike on the insolent impiety, and on the certain retribution, of the rebellious sinner; of him who *stretched out his hand against God*, and chose for his habitation places accursed by God's judgment, of him of whose impunity Job had dared to speak so bitterly. ‘He whom I describe is,’ says Eliphaz, ‘but the type of a class who are doomed

ver. 23, 24.
ver. 25-35.
ver. 28.

LECTURE V. to suffer alike the pangs of conscience and the blows of chastisement.'

Chap. xv. There is, my friends, as we know, a certain measure of truth in what this Arab sage and chieftain says. Conscience *has* its stings. The night-scene from Macbeth is not false to nature. Great criminals often meet their doom, their just doom, even here. There are traces no doubt, as Bishop Butler reminds us, traces and indications of a divine and just government, even here below. There is a power revealed even in this life that 'makes for righteousness.' 'Might and right differ frightfully from hour to hour,' says Carlyle, 'but give them centuries to try it in, and they are found in the end to be identical.' But meanwhile, how many are there to whom the stings of conscience are an unmeaning word. How many, Job will yet come forward and remind us, amass wealth by unrighteous means, and die in peace, rich and prosperous.

And meantime there is the lot of those, who, if the friends are right, must be under the just frown of God. There is Job himself, bereft of all that made life worth living. There are those in our own day, the sick, the poor, the oppressed, the down-trodden, all who are forced for a time to sit down upon the ash-heap, and cry that life is a burden hard to bear, who are ready to echo Job's sighs for the rest of death. And there are the friends or champions in all times of lost causes, the martyrs to truth, those who have died in dungeons, or at the stake, or in the lost battle, or in cheerless solitude among races whom they have tried vainly to raise and christianise.

You see how long might be the list. But if the friends are right, these and the army of the defeated whom

they represent, those too, the victims of the chances, as we say, of life, those 'on whom the Tower¹ of Siloam fell,' are all rejected of God, all sinners beyond their brethren. And behind these, is the form of One, who was *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, from whom we, his fellow-men who stood around his cross—hid as it were our faces, He was despised and we esteemed Him not*².

LECTURE
V.
—♦—
Chap. xv.

And the Job who listens to this teaching of his friends, finds in it no Gospel. It is no wonder that he bursts forth with the cry that has echoed so far,

I have heard many such things:

xvi. 2.

Miserable comforters are ye all.

And round this point the conflict will rage even more keenly than heretofore. God Himself will be called in to decide the quarrel.

Is there no hope for those who fail in the struggle for existence? Is there no Gospel for those who succeed in that struggle, when their own hour of darkness comes? It is, as this book has reminded and will remind us, a question as world-old as it is momentous; this mystery of suffering, this sense of a 'whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now.'

Over those whose words we are reading hung the lustrous skies of Asia, glittering with innumerable stars. But no day-star from the East had as yet arisen; no Christmas night, no Easter morning, had brought light to souls *that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death*. It is the sense of that darkness to which so much of this book gives a voice, to the desire for fuller light, and to the craving for a more perfect righteousness.

¹ St. Luke xiii. 4.

² Isaiah liii. 3.

LECTURE VI.

CHAPTERS XVI—XXI.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. XVI—XXI.)

CHAPTER XVI.



¹ Or,
Wearisome
² Heb.
words of
wind.

- 16 Then Job answered and said,
2 I have heard many such things :
 ¹ Miserable comforters are ye all.
3 Shall ² vain words have an end ?
 Or what provoketh thee that thou answerest ?
4 I also could speak as ye do ;
 If your soul were in my soul's stead,
 I could join words together against you,
 And shake mine head at you.
5 *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth,
 And the solace of my lips should assuage *your grief*.
6 Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged :
 And though I forbear, ³ what am I eased ?
7 But now he hath made me weary :
 Thou hast made desolate all my company.
8 And thou hast ⁴ laid fast hold on me, *which* is a witness *against*
 me :
 And my leanness riseth up against me, it testifieth to my face.
9 He hath torn me in his wrath, and ⁵ persecuted me ;
 He hath gnashed upon me with his teeth :
 Mine adversary sharpeneth his eyes upon me.
10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth ;
 They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully :
 They gather themselves together against me.
11 God delivereth me to the ungodly,
 And casteth me into the hands of the wicked.
12 I was at ease, and he brake me asunder ;
 Yea, he hath taken me by the neck, and dashed me to pieces :

³ Heb.
what de-
parteth
from me ?

⁴ Or,
shrivelled
me up

⁵ Or, *hated*

CHAPTER He hath also set me up for his mark.

XVI. His ¹ archers compass me round about, 13

—♦— He cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare;

¹ Or, arrows He poureth out my gall upon the ground. 14

Or, mighty He breaketh me with breach upon breach; 15

ones He runneth upon me like a ² giant.

² Or, I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, 16

mighty And have ³ laid my horn in the dust.

man My face is ⁴ foul with weeping, 17

³ Or, defiled And on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

⁴ Or, red Although there is no violence in mine hands, 18

And my prayer is pure.

O earth, cover not thou my blood, 19

⁵ Or, have And let my cry ⁵ have no *resting* place.

no more Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, 20

place And he that voucheth for me is on high.

My friends scorn me: 21

But mine eye poureth out tears unto God;

⁶ Or, That ⁶ That he would maintain the right of a man with God, 22

one might And of a son of man with his neighbour!

plead for For when a few years are come, 23

a man I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

with God, My spirit is consumed, my days are extinct, 17

as a son of The grave is *ready* for me.

man Surely there are ⁷ mockers with me, 2

pleadeth And mine eye abideth in their provocation.

for his Surely there are ⁷ mockers with me, 3

neighbour Give now a pledge, be surety for me with thyself;

⁷ Heb. Who is there that will strike hands with me? 4

mockery. For thou hast hid their heart from understanding:

Therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.

⁸ Heb. He that denounceth his friends for a ⁸ prey, 5

portion. Even the eyes of his children shall fail.

He hath made me also a byword of the people; 6

⁹ Or, one And I am become ⁹ an open abhorring.

in whose Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, 7

face they And all my members are as a shadow.

spit Upright men shall be astonished at this, 8

And the innocent shall stir up himself against the godless.

9 Yet shall the righteous hold on his way,

And he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.

10 But return ye, all of you, and come now :

¹ And I shall not find a wise man among you.

11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off,

Even the ² thoughts of my heart.

12 They change the night into day :

The light, *say they*, is near ³ unto the darkness.

13 ⁴ If I look for ⁵ Sheol as mine house ;

If I have spread my couch in the darkness ;

14 If I have said to ⁶ corruption, Thou art my father ;

To the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister ;

15 Where then is my hope ?

And as for my hope, who shall see it ?

16 It shall go down to the bars of ⁵ Sheol,

When once there is rest in the dust.

18 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

² How long will ye lay snares for words ?

Consider, and afterwards we will speak.

³ Wherefore are we counted as beasts,

And are become unclean in your sight ?

⁴ Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger,

Shall the earth be forsaken for thee ?

Or shall the rock be removed out of its place ?

⁵ Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,

And the ⁷ spark of his fire shall not shine.

⁶ The light shall be dark in his tent,

And his lamp ⁸ above him shall be put out.

⁷ The steps of his strength shall be straitened,

And his own counsel shall cast him down.

⁸ For he is cast into a net by his own feet,

And he walketh upon the toils.

⁹ A gin shall take *him* by the heel,

And a snare shall lay hold on him.

10 A noose is hid for him in the ground,

And a trap for him in the way.

CHAPTER
XVII.

—♦—

¹ Or, *For*
I find not

² Heb.
possessions.

³ Or, *be-*
cause of

⁴ Or, *If I*
hope, Sheol
is mine
house ; I
have spread
. . . I have
said . . .
and where
now is my
hope ?

⁵ Or, *the*
grave

⁶ Or,
the pit

⁷ Or,
flame

⁸ Or,
beside

CHAPTER XVIII.	Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, And shall chase him at his heels.	11
—♦—	His strength shall be hungerbitten,	12
¹ Or, <i>at his side</i>	And calamity shall be ready ¹ for his halting. It shall devour the ² members of his body,	13
² Heb. <i>bars of his skin.</i>	<i>Yea</i> , the firstborn of death shall devour his members. He shall be rooted out of his tent wherein he trusteth ;	14
³ Heb. <i>it shall (or thou shalt) bring him.</i>	And ³ he shall be brought to the king of terrors. ⁴ There shall dwell in his tent that which is none of his :	15
⁴ Or, <i>It shall dwell in his tent, that it be no more his or, because it is none of his</i>	Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation. His roots shall be dried up beneath, And above shall his branch ⁵ be cut off.	16
⁵ Or, <i>with</i>	His remembrance shall perish from the earth, And he shall have no name in the street.	17
⁶ Or, <i>They that dwell in the west are . . . as they that dwell in the east are &c.</i>	He shall be driven from light into darkness, And chased out of the world. He shall have neither son nor son's son among his people, Nor any remaining where he sojourned.	18
⁶ Or, <i>They that dwell in the west are . . . as they that dwell in the east are &c.</i>	⁶ They that come after shall be astonished at his day, As they that went before ⁷ were affrighted. Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous, And this is the place of him that knoweth not God.	19
⁷ Heb. <i>laid hold on horror.</i>	Then Job answered and said, How long will ye vex my soul, And break me in pieces with words ? These ten times have ye reproached me : Ye are not ashamed that ye deal hardly with me. And be it indeed that I have erred, Mine error remaineth with myself.	2
⁸ Or, <i>Will ye indeed . . . reproach ?</i>	⁸ If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, And plead against me my reproach : Know now that God hath ⁹ subverted me <i>in my cause</i> , And hath compassed me with his net.	3
⁹ Or, <i>over-thrown me</i>	Behold, I ¹⁰ cry out of wrong, but I am not heard :	4
¹⁰ Or, <i>cry out, Violence !</i>	I cry for help, but there is no judgement. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, And hath set darkness in my paths.	5
		6
		7
		8

CHAPTER
XIX.

- 9 He hath stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown from my head.
- 10 He hath broken me down on every side, and I am gone :
And mine hope hath he plucked up like a tree.
- 11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me,
And he counteth me unto him as *one of* his adversaries.
- 12 His troops come on together, and cast up their way against me,
And encamp round about my tent.
- 13 He hath put my brethren far from me,
And mine acquaintance are wholly estranged from me.
- 14 My kinsfolk have failed,
And my familiar friends have forgotten me.
- 15 They that ¹dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for
a stranger :
I am an alien in their sight.
- 16 I call unto my servant, and he giveth me no answer,
Though I intreat him with my mouth.
- 17 My breath is strange to my wife,
And ²my supplication to the children ³of my *mother's* womb.
- 18 Even young children despise me ;
If I arise, they speak against me.
- 19 All ⁴my inward friends abhor me :
And they whom I loved are turned against me.
- 20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh,
And I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.
- 21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends ;
For the hand of God hath touched me.
- 22 Why do ye persecute me as God,
And are not satisfied with my flesh ?
- 23 O that my words were now written !
Oh that they were inscribed in a book !
- 24 That with an iron pen and lead
They were graven in the rock for ever !
- 25 ⁵But I know that my ⁶redeemer liveth,
And that he shall stand up at the last upon the ⁷earth :
- 26 ⁸And after my skin hath been thus destroyed,
Yet ⁹from my flesh shall I see God :

¹ Or,
sojourn

² Or, *I*
make sup-
plication
Or, *I am*
loathsome

³ Or, *of my*
body

⁴ Heb. *the*
men of my
council.

⁵ Or, *For*

⁶ Or, *vin-*
dictator
Heb. *goel.*

⁷ Heb.
dust.

⁸ Or, *And*
after my
skin hath
been de-
stroyed,
this shall
be, even
from &c.
Or, *And*
though
after my
skin this
body be
destroyed,
yet from
&c.

⁹ Or,
without

CHAPTER	Whom I shall see ¹ for myself,	27
XIX.	And mine eyes shall behold, and not ² another.	
—♦—	My reins are consumed within me.	
¹ Or, on my side	If ye say, How we will persecute him!	28
² Or, as a stranger	³ Seeing that the root of the matter is found in ⁴ me ;	
	Be ye afraid of the sword :	29
³ Or, And that	For ⁵ wrath <i>bringeth</i> the punishments of the sword,	
	That ye may know there is a judgement.	
⁴ Many ancient authorities read, him.	Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,	20
	Therefore do my thoughts give answer to me,	2
⁵ Or, wrathful are	⁶ Even by reason of my haste that is in me.	
	I have heard the reproof which putteth me to shame,	3
⁶ Or, And by reason of this my haste is within me	⁷ And the spirit of my understanding answereth me.	
	Knowest thou <i>not</i> this of old time,	4
	Since man was placed upon earth,	
	That the triumphing of the wicked is short,	5
	And the joy of the godless but for a moment ?	
⁷ Or, But out of my understanding my spirit answereth me	Though his excellency mount up to the heavens,	6
	And his head reach unto the clouds ;	
	Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung :	7
	They which have seen him shall say, Where is he ?	
	He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found :	8
	Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.	
	The eye which saw him shall see him no more ;	9
	Neither shall his place any more behold him.	
⁸ Or, as otherwise read, The poor shall oppress his children	⁸ His children shall seek the favour of the poor,	10
	And his hands shall give back his wealth.	
	His bones are full of his youth,	11
	But it shall lie down with him in the dust.	
	Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,	12
	Though he hide it under his tongue ;	
	Though he spare it, and will not let it go,	13
	But keep it still within his mouth ;	
	Yet his meat in his bowels is turned,	14
	It is the gall of asps within him.	
	He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them	15
	up again :	

CHAPTER
XX.

- God shall cast them out of his belly.
- 16 He shall suck the poison of asps:
The viper's tongue shall slay him.
- 17 He shall not look upon the rivers,
The flowing streams of honey and butter.
- 18 That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not
swallow it down;
According to the substance ¹that he hath gotten, he shall not ¹Heb. of
rejoice. *his*
exchange.
- 19 For he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor;
He hath violently taken away an house, ²and he shall not build ²Or, *which*
it up. *he builded*
not
- 20 Because he knew no quietness ³within him,
He shall not save aught of that wherein he delighteth. ³Or, *in*
his greed
- 21 There was nothing left that he devoured not;
Therefore his prosperity shall not endure. *Heb. in*
his belly.
- 22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits:
The hand of every one that is in misery shall come upon him
- 23 ⁴When he is about to fill his belly,
God shall cast the fierceness of his wrath upon him,
And shall rain it upon him ⁵while he is eating.
- 24 He shall flee from the iron weapon,
And the bow of brass shall strike him through.
- 25 He draweth it forth, and it cometh out of his body:
Yea, the glittering point cometh out of his gall;
Terrors are upon him. ⁴Or, *Let*
it be for the
filling of
his belly
that God
shall cast
&c.
- 26 All darkness is laid up for his treasures:
A fire not blown *by man* shall devour him;
⁶It shall consume that which is left in his tent. ⁵Or, *as*
his food
- 27 The heavens shall reveal his iniquity,
And the earth shall rise up against him.
- 28 The increase of his house shall depart,
His goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.
- 29 This is the portion of a wicked man from God,
And the heritage appointed unto him by God.
Then Job answered and said,
Hear diligently my speech;

CHAPTER And let this be your consolations.

XXI.

- ♦♦—
¹ Or, *thou shalt mock* And after that I have spoken, ¹mock on. 3
² Or, *of* As for me, is my complaint ²to man? 4
³ Heb. *Look unto me.* ³Mark me, and be astonished, 5
⁴ Or, *in peace, without fear* And lay your hand upon your mouth. 6
⁵ Heb. *lift up the voice.* Even when I remember I am troubled, 6
And horror taketh hold on my flesh.
⁶ Or, *the grave* Wherefore do the wicked live, 7
Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?
⁷ Or, *Ye say, Lo &c.* Their seed is established with them in their sight, 8
And their offspring before their eyes.
⁸ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* Their houses are ⁴safe from fear, 9
Neither is the rod of God upon them.
⁹ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; 10
Their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.
¹⁰ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* They send forth their little ones like a flock, 11
And their children dance.
¹¹ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* They ⁵sing to the timbrel and harp, 12
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.
¹² Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* They spend their days in prosperity, 13
And in a moment they go down to ⁶Sheol.
¹³ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* Yet they said unto God, Depart from us; 14
For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.
¹⁴ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? 15
And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?
¹⁵ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* ⁷Lo, their prosperity is not in their hand: 16
The counsel of the wicked is far from me.
¹⁶ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* ⁸How oft is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out? 17
That their calamity cometh upon them?
¹⁷ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* That *God* distributeth sorrows in his anger? 18
That they are as stubble before the wind,
And as chaff that the storm carrieth away?
¹⁸ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* ⁹*Ye say,* God layeth up his iniquity for his children. 19
Let him recompense it unto himself, that he may know it.
¹⁹ Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their calamity upon them!* Let his own eyes see his destruction, 20
drink &c.

CHAPTER
XXI.

And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21 For what pleasure hath he in his house after him,
When the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

22 Shall any teach God knowledge?
Seeing he judgeth those that are high.

23 One dieth in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and quiet:

24 His ¹breasts are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moistened.

25 And another dieth in bitterness of soul,
And never tasteth of good.

26 They lie down alike in the dust,
And the worm covereth them.

27 Behold, I know your thoughts,
And the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28 For ye say, Where is the house of the prince?
And where is the tent wherein the wicked dwelt?

29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way?
And do ye not know their tokens?

30 That the evil man is ²reserved to the day of calamity?
That they are ³led forth to the day of wrath?

31 Who shall declare his way to his face?
And who shall repay him what he hath done?

32 ⁴Yet shall he be borne to the grave,
And ⁵shall keep watch over the tomb.

33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him,
And all men shall draw after him,
As there were innumerable before him.

34 How then comfort ye me ⁶in vain,
Seeing in your answers there remaineth *only* ⁷falsehood?

¹ Or, *milk
pails*

² Or,
*spared in
Ec.*

³ Or, *led
away in
Ec.*

⁴ Or,
*Moreover
he is
borne to
the grave,
and keepeth
watch over
his tomb.
The clods
of the
valley are
sweet unto
him; and
all men
draw Ec.*

⁵ Or, *they
shall keep*

⁶ Or, *with
vanity*

⁷ Or, *faith-
lessness*

LECTURE VI.

CHAPTERS XVI—XXI.

WE open to-day the sixteenth chapter, at the memorable
cry with which Job rejects with indignation the teaching—the
vain words he calls it—set before him by the oldest and the
wisest of his friends. ‘*Miserable comforters,*’ he calls them ;

LECTURE
VI.
—♦—
Chap. xvi.

I have heard many such things :

Miserable comforters are ye all.

‘I, too,’ he goes on, ‘even I, whose cries and words you
blame and scorn, could proffer, were I in your place, you
in mine, the cheap, contemptuous comfort which you bring
me. I, too, could shake the head, and heap up words, and’
—if we may venture to depart from our new Revision¹—‘give
you mere wordy relief, mere lip-consolation.’ But his heart
is sick within him. He knows not what to do. He feels in
a sad extremity. Silence and speech, he says, are alike
unavailing. He needs help so sorely, and he finds none,
no guidance, no solace. He turns from his friends to his
God. ‘It is Thou,’ he says, ‘that hast left me thus forlorn.
He it is who *hath made me weary*; yea, *Thou hast made*
desolate all my company. It is Thy heavy hand, marring
thus my frame and face, that bears witness against me before
this human tribunal.’

ver. 4.

ver. 5.

ver. 6.

ver. 7, 8.

And as his spirit flags and droops, he can no longer speak
face to face even with his God. He covers, as it were, his
eyes, and passing, you will notice, from the second to the

¹ See ver. 5, page 129.

LECTURE
VI.Chap. xvi.
ver. 9.

third person—from ‘*Thou*’ to ‘*He*’—no longer wavering between the two, he broods over the dealings of Him who has done worse than stand far off in his hour of trial, who is worse than a God ‘*Who hideth himself*¹.’ He describes how, what seems to be God’s wrath, has torn him too, as, in the language of his friends, it tears the wicked. God is his adversary, man his foe. He sees himself at last alone in the world, an object of abhorrence to mankind; like the Psalmist whose accents rang upon the

ver. 10, 11. Cross, he too sees men *gape upon him with their mouths*, and *smite him on the cheek reproachfully*. The ungodly rabble close in contempt round him. All count him ‘*stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*².’ ‘And are they not right? He surely has declared against me;’ and successive images of God’s hostility trouble his soul, and find expression on

ver. 12. his lips. Now, as a beast of prey, his Maker seems to his distempered fancy to glare at, and seize him; now his

ver. 13. arrows pierce his vitals; now, as a giant assailant, he beats

ver. 14. down with breach after breach the citadel of life. And Job has yielded to the storm. Body and spirit alike are prostrate.

ver. 15. In the language of his day, *sackcloth is on his skin, his horn*

ver. 16. *is in the dust, his face is disfigured with weeping, on his eyelids is the shadow of death*. Abject misery can sink no lower. ‘*Was ever,*’ he seems to say, ‘*sorrow like unto my sorrow*³?’

Yet even then, as he heaves this sigh, this *de profundis*, there is one thing that he will not let go—the testimony of his conscience, that he has lived as the friend of God, not as his enemy. He is certain that he does not belong to the class whose sins and punishment his friends have set before him for a warning. To this certainty he clings as to a plank

¹ Isaiah xlv. 15.² Isaiah liii. 4.³ Lamentations i. 12.

in the devouring waves. Deep is his anguish, but he is conscience-free. LECTURE
VI.

There is no violence, he says passionately, *on my hands*, Chap. xvi.
My prayer is pure. ver. 17.

And then, with a cry of almost bewildering boldness, he appeals to his mother-earth, from which the blood of righteous Abel once cried up to God, not to cover *his* blood, when the end comes at last, but to let the cry of his wronged life go up from her bosom, and find no rest till it has pierced the ear of God.

O earth, cover not thou my blood, ver. 18.

And let my cry have no resting place!

‘Yea,’ he says, finding hope even in despair, ‘there at least, there in God’s heavenly home, I feel that I have a witness, and a voucher, and an advocate.’ ver. 19. And before his storm-tossed and beclouded soul, there rises through the driving mists of pain a double vision. One is of a God who seems to be his enemy; and one is of a righteous God, whom he feels to be, who needs must be, his friend. Is he the last who has felt this inward conflict and tumult?

My friends scorn me, he says in the 20th verse,

But mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

Nay, to God he appeals, the God who reads his heart, to maintain his cause, the cause of a *son of man*, a poor human creature, against the God who wrongs him; to do this, ere the few years of his pilgrimage are ended, ere, ver. 21, 22.

I go the way whence I shall not return.

It seems to me, brethren, a passage, when once its meaning is made clear to us, of a spiritual pathos almost matchless even in this pathetic book; this appeal, as it has been well called, of the poor solitary Patriarch from wrath to love,

LECTURE VI. from God to God¹. The winds beat him, the billows break over him, but the anchor of Faith still holds.

Chap. xvii. And now, in the next chapter, the paroxysm of torture gives way to a duller pain, and his loud cry is changed
 ver. 1, 2. into a lower moan. 'Death is near me,' he says, 'and the grave is open; and around me are those who mock me with the hope of restoration to God's favour, from which
 ver. 3. I am banished. Thou, Thou alone, canst be my friend,
 ver. 4, 5. my surety, my advocate; Thou it is whose stroke has estranged the hearts of earthly friends, and made them tempt a traitor's doom by turning so cruelly against him with whom they once held sweet converse. Thou it is who
 ver. 6, 7. hast left me to be a by-word of abject misery to the rabble of mankind; left me with these eyes dimmed with sorrow, and this wasted frame.' 'And what,' he asks, 'will be the teaching of my story, the moral of Job's life? Well,
 ver. 8. indeed, may *the upright be astonished* as they read it; well may the innocent, whose life has been like mine, be discomfited and dismayed, as they turn from my sad lot to the unrebuked career of the godless. But for all that, and for all the wrongs and puzzles of life,

ver. 9. *Yet shall the righteous hold on his way,
 And he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.*

It is a memorable saying, my friends, and goes to the very heart of the teaching of the book! *Doth Job serve God for nought?* said Satan. Here is his answer. Deserted, as it seems, and more than deserted, treated as a foe, by God and man, he will not say that goodness is merely that which

¹ For a very different, yet analogous, conflict of thought and feeling, see 'In Memoriam,' LIII-LV.

wins reward ; wickedness merely that which brings punishment. Let rewards and punishments be awarded as they may, *yet shall the righteous hold on his way* through all, Chap. xvii. yet shall the heart of the pure *wax stronger and stronger* ; sure that somehow, though he knows not how, he must be walking in the right way ; sure that some day, he knows not when, God will declare for him and vindicate his cause.

The words 'mount like a rocket,' cries a commentator¹, who has looked with rarely keen glance into the secrets of the book, above the tragic darkness that surrounds them. But they do more than this ; even as they mount, they shed a momentary light on the sense in which, even through these mournful chapters, we may yet speak of the *patience*, in its noblest sense, of poor impatient Job. For we may use the word no longer to denote a mere calm submissive resignation, but rather the firm, tenacious, unconquerable hold which his spirit keeps on the essential truth to which that spirit clings ; that behind all the perplexing sights of life *must* live a God who loves justice and works righteousness. And we remember words, spoken by One who was looking forward to a time of 'great tribulation ;' 'in your *patience* possess ye your souls² ;' and again, 'he that *endureth to the end* the same shall be saved³.'

But then once more his 'spirit waxeth faint.' He ends ver. 10, 11. the chapter by turning mournfully to his friends, and addressing to them a few sad closing words. 'Ye bid me hope,' he says, 'and tell me of the approach of light, on condition of my following your counsel ;'

They change the night into day :

ver. 12.

The light, say they, is near unto the darkness.

¹ F. Delitzsch. ² St. Luke xxi. 19. ³ St. Matthew xxiv. 13.

LECTURE VI. 'It is all in vain. My course is run, my earthly ties are severed. My home is the grave; my bed is spread

Chap. xvii. in darkness; decay and corruption and the worm, are to me
ver. 13-16. father, and mother, and sister, and kindred; where is my hope?

It will go down with me past the bars of the gates of the underworld, down with me to man's last rest in the dust of death.' 'No hope,' he seems to say, 'of answer or redress.'

Chap. xviii. His piteous words, that remind us, sometimes of the Passion-Psalms, sometimes of the picture put before us in the closing chapters of Isaiah, win no sympathy or pity from his friends.

Bildad, who followed Eliphaz before, does so for the second
ver. 2, 3. time. He, too, like his friend, even more than he, is shocked

and outraged at what seems to him Job's presumptuous and scornful attitude. He, too, thinks it enough to repeat and enforce what seems to him the eternal truth, that suffering is the sure concomitant, the sure result, of evil-doing. 'Against this law Job frets and "tears himself" in vain. God's immutable laws will hold good: the solid order of the earth will not be changed for him.'

ver. 4. *Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?*

Or shall the rock be removed out of its place?

ver. 5-11. 'The principles of the moral world will not be set aside, because Job rails against them!' He is content, therefore,

to hold up once more a vivid picture of the fate of the ungodly, of the darkness that shall quench his light, of the snares that wait for his steps, of the terrors that haunt his soul, of the calamities that wait for his fall. 'Sore

ver. 12-14. disease, *first-born* of the progeny of death, fastens on his limbs, and brings its victim into the presence of the *King of 'Terrors.'* He is not merely, in these verses, declaring a

general law—he is holding up a mirror before the eyes of the shuddering Job, as he goes through the list of Job's own pains and miseries.

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Chap. xviii.
ver. 15.

There shall dwell in his tent, he goes on, that which is none of his.

Is it a strange tribe, or the wild creatures of the desert? And again, '*a rain of brimstone*' (an allusion, it may be, to the fate of Sodom) 'shall doom his home to shame and sterility.' Figure after figure is exhausted to express the extinction of his race. 'Nor son, nor son's sons (*nephews* in its older sense is the word in our older version) shall survive to prolong his name, and far and wide and long shall men look with horror on the doom of the wicked.'

ver. 16-19.

ver. 20, 21.

It is a powerful picture. Its substance seems exactly the same as that drawn by Eliphaz; but it is obvious, far more than it was before, that Job's demeanour under his sufferings has done more than pain and shock and alienate his friends; that the parable which Bildad utters is no mere general teaching; that, as has been well said, the '*Thou art the man*' trembles on the speaker's lips.

And Job feels this keenly. The sore sense of a spirit wounded to the very quick is revealed in every word of his answer. 'How long will you, my ancient friends, crush me with your taunts?' he asks in the 19th Chapter;

Chap. xix.

How long will ye vex my soul,

ver. 1, 2.

And break me in pieces with words?

'If I have erred, mine is the error: again and again, without shame or pity, have ye poured out your insults; but if ye needs must sit in judgment on me, listen to my solemn words; once more hear the sad deliberate judgment of my soul. Know this, you who are so sure that all suffering is

ver. 4, 5.

ver. 6.

LECTURE the result of wickedness, know that in this case it is God who
 VI. has done his servant wrong. It is He, not my heinous
 Chap. xix. wickedness, as you say, which has cast me into the net. Yes!
 ver. 7. I raise a cry that I am wronged, even as one of our tribe

would cry, if wrongfully attacked; *I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard*; I cry for justice, but there is none.' 'And is this
 ver. 8-12. God's world?' he seems to ask. 'There is darkness round me, and a fence before me, and no escape; and shame and despair are my portion; and God,—if you and my own sick heart are right—counts me as a foe, and launches against me

ver. 13-20. his legion of pains. And all the world is changed. Brethren and acquaintance and kinsfolk and familiar friends are all estranged, all turned to foes.' How the closing words of the one most melancholy of all Psalms¹ come back to us;

My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me:

And hid mine acquaintance out of my sight!

He draws a picture, a counter picture, as it would seem, to that of his friends, of his own sufferings. He describes them as those of some poor leper, in his own Eastern land then as now, and in other lands, our own amongst them, for centuries yet to come, looked on as one stricken of God, and loathsome to mankind. He speaks of himself as vainly supplicating those who were once at his beck, a stranger to his wife and brethren, scorned and mocked by the careless cruelty of children, abhorred and repulsed by his friends;

ver. 19. *All my inward friends abhor me:*

And they whom I loved are turned against me!

And then, for the first and last time, he utters a short, pathetic, yearning cry for human sympathy. In his self-pity at his isolation from the God who had once loaded him with

¹ Ps. lxxxviii. 18.

benefits, he appeals for one moment to the common ties of humanity and friendship ;

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends :

For the hand of God hath touched me.

Why do ye persecute me as God,

And are not satisfied with my flesh ?

‘Have you not eaten my heart enough with your causeless accusations?’ But he pleads in vain ; there is no human comforter to dry his tears, and all seems lost. The terrible threat seems to have come home ; *The heaven that is above him is brass, and the earth beneath him is iron*¹. Yet even then, in this his darkest and most hopeless hour, he will not abandon the faith which he had grasped before, that the eternal laws of right and justice will yet be vindicated ; that neither ‘*life nor death, nor things temporal nor things to come,*’ shall wholly part him from his God. He appeals from the present to the future, from the malice of ephemeral man, from what seems the momentary wrath of God, to the fatherly and just heart of Him, Who lives for ever, and Who must surely one day own His servant. We draw near at the 23rd verse to perhaps the most memorable, and one of the most disputed, of all Job’s utterances. Let us then study it carefully.

‘*Oh that my words, my cry to God, were written down ! Oh that they were recorded in some scroll ; yet not on frail papyrus-leaf, or perishable parchment, but graven and chiselled in monumental letters on some hard rock-side ; filled in with lead, to meet the eye of far-distant ages.*’ And then there pass from his lips words into which Christian translators have breathed a distinctness, a hope and certainty, which doubtless far transcends the sublime, but dim, faith of

LECTURE
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Chap. xix.
ver. 21, 22.

ver. 23.

ver. 24.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 23.

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Chap. xix.

ver. 25.

the original, and which I will endeavour to put before you in what seems to be their true sense, as spoken by him whose heart refuses wholly to fail him in those deep water floods.

ver. 26.

'I know,' he cries, *'I know that my Redeemer, my Rescuer, my Vindicator, liveth ;' liveth,* for He is none other than the living God—no mere mute inscription, no human 'Goel,' or avenger—on whom Job rests his faith. *'And He, at the last,* when all this bitter conflict is over, *will stand upon the earth,'* or rather, *'on the dust,* the dust of death into which I am sinking. *And even*

ver. 27.

after my skin, this poor skin with all that it encases, *is destroyed—* even when "the first-born of death," and the "King of terrors" himself, of whom you speak, have done their worst—*yet even then,'* not 'in,' but rather '*from,'* (in the sense most probably of *removed from, without*) '*my flesh,* though my body moulder in the dust, *I shall see my God'*—the God now hidden, the God to whom he had appealed before ¹ to hide him for awhile in the world of the dead, and then to call him forth. 'HE will manifest himself at last to his forgotten friend, who will have survived for this the shock of the great Destroyer ; *Whom I shall behold,'* he goes on, 'yea I, the prey of death, *shall see Him,* see Him *for myself,'* (or 'see Him *on my side,'* the phrase is ambiguous). '*Yea mine eyes shall behold Him, I and not another. My reins,* my very inmost heart, *consume and melt within me* at the vision.' The sick heart faints with joy. Despair gives way to gladness. The poor tortured sufferer, who again and again has looked on the inevitable death which is waiting for him, as the limit of his days, as the final severer between himself and his God, rises to the region of a sublime, a rapturous hope. We dare not write into his words all the 'sure and certain hope of a joyful

¹ Chap. xiv. 13.

resurrection,' which the Christian utters; still less that anticipation of a bodily rising from the grave, of a re-clothing of his spirit in flesh, which the passage breathes in the great Latin¹ translation, dear for ages to Western Christendom. We recognise even in the familiar words of our own older version², phrases and thoughts, which outrun the Patriarch's aspirations, the Patriarch's faith. But for all that, when we have stripped the passage of all that is adventitious—all that even unconsciously imports into its framework the ideas and faith of another and a later age—we still hear the sublime cry of the Saint of the old world, as he stands face to face with the king of terrors: 'Though my outward man decay and perish, yet God shall reveal himself to me, to my true self'—*Oh grave where is thy victory?* He plants, it has been well said, the flag of triumph on his own grave. And his words, in one form or another, have lived, my friends, longer than he looked for. They will outlive the scroll for which he sighed, the very rock on which just now he wished to see them engraved.

Job has reached the climax of passionate clinging to his God. 'His heart,' as he says, 'is on fire within him.' He adds two verses of warning to his friends, to whom the day ver. 28, 29. of his vindication may bring judgment. They are memorable, in spite of their almost impenetrable obscurity, as containing a phrase which, like others in the book, has gone

¹ *Scio enim quod Redemptor meus vivit, et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum, et rursum circumdabor pelle mea, et in carne mea videbo Dominum. Vulgate.*

² And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.—A.V. A glance at the italics will show how much has been introduced by the translators:—*And after my skin hath been thus destroyed Yet from my flesh shall I see God*, is the literal, if ambiguous, rendering adopted by the R.V. See p. 133.

LECTURE VI. the round alike of our literature and of our common speech.
 —♦♦— The *root of the matter* is here, no doubt, the cause of Job's sufferings; in his friend's eyes, his guilt; and he seems to warn them against the judgment which they may incur by treating him as guilty.

He has now given full vent to his anguish. He has clung for all that to his sense of innocence; and he has risen from his despair to a height from which he sees, for one brief moment, 'the land that is very far off,' the better shore
 Chap. xx. that lies beyond the dark stream of death. And then, silent and exhausted, he has to listen once more to the voice of the third of his counsellors.

Zophar, who spoke harshly and rudely before, is unmoved alike by his friend's appeal for pity and by his reproaches.

I will not ask you to enter into any detailed discussion
 ver. 2, 3. of what he says, but he is much stirred, he says, by Job's *reproof*, which he makes haste to answer. His answer is from first to last a repetition, in another form, of what we have had so often put before us. It is one more series of pictures of the doom that surely waits upon the wicked.

It begins with,

ver. 4. *Knowest thou not this of old time,*
Since man was placed upon earth,
That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
 ver. 5. *And the joy of the godless but for a moment?*

And then follows a train of images, often, even in the Revised Version, requiring much care to read clearly. The aim of each and all is to paint the certain misery that befalls the great criminals of earth, the wanton oppressor, the avaricious, and

the fraudulent. The laborious student can trace out the thought of line after line. As he pores over word after word, he can read, beneath the superficial obscurity of the language, a picture, often exceedingly vivid and striking, of power and greatness cut short, and of ambitious hopes defeated by terrible retribution.

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But it is not well that we, who meet here, should lose our grasp of the general progress of the dialogue, by lingering too long over these less important questions. It is clearly undesirable that we should allow the necessary difficulty of rendering Eastern imagery into modern language, to tempt us into assigning to subordinate details a significance beyond their due. It is enough to say that through a series of impressive images of calamity and disappointment, we see before us, now the vanished tyrant's children crouching before the poor: now himself cheated of the golden vision, *the rivers, the flowing streams of honey and butter*, for which he had looked. We see at last the guilty—'in the lost battle, borne down by the flying,' and struck, as he *flees from the iron sword*, by an arrow from the *bow of brass—drawing forth the glittering point* from a mortal wound, with heaven and earth leagued against him. Last of all come the words,

ver. 10.

ver. 17.

ver. 24.

ver. 25-27.

*This is the portion of a wicked man from God,
And the heritage appointed unto him by God.*

ver. 29.

It is the old story, as we might say, and leaves quite out of sight 'the root of the matter,' the contrast, i. e. between Job's earlier life, as portrayed in the Prologue to the Dialogue, and that of the tyrant and oppressor whose fall is described so eloquently. And meanwhile all cries and appeals on the part of Job are, in his friends' eyes, mere proofs that he

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Chap. xxi.

refuses to read aright the universal law as revealed in the experience of life. They no longer, as they once did, hold forth to him hopes of reconciliation and restoration. The images that they put before him grow darker and darker, their arguments are more strictly limited and narrowed to a single and uniform line of thought. *His* soul sways this way and that; he is beset on all sides by a very host of conflicting doubts and fears, of aspirations and hopes. *They* utter, repeat, enforce, and emphasize the one single truth in which they find a key to all the seeming contradictions of life, and to all Job's sufferings. '*Great calamities mean great misdeeds.* This and nothing less than this,' they say, 'is the one lesson which God's just rule reveals. Lay this, Job, to heart.'

And under this bitter and reiterated teaching, Job's soul passes once more into a state of ferment and revolt. The speech with which he answers Zophar is one of unrestrained, outspoken, unmeasured questioning of God's righteous government of the world. It is this, and nothing less. It is a terrible doubt, as he says himself. All else is insignificant before it. It is not in his power, remember, to deny or doubt the existence of God as the Ruler of the world. Such a thought would have been impossible to him. He cannot look on his losses, or his sufferings, as merely the result of physical laws, electrical discharges here, barometric depressions there; or again of accidental contact with some germ of disease, or of the natural desire of plunder on the part of Bedouin tribes. He cannot look on pain, or on injustice, as seen in the world around him, as merely the result of the necessary conflict among creatures endowed with life, he knows not how, and left to struggle with each

other for existence in a godless world, where the one hope of progress lies in the extinction of the weak, in the survival of the fittest.

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That God rules the world is the first article of his creed; and as his friends, with a wearisome iteration, enforce upon him their reading of God's laws, and try to bring this reading home to, what seems to them, the slumbering conscience of their friend, their hard dogmatism forces on him a question for an answer to which his soul travails and tortures itself in vain. It is a lesson for us all, for all who have to deal, either with pain which we do not feel, or with doubts which we have left behind us, or have never shared.

He too looks forth, even as they bid him look, into the world outside himself. He passes from his own individual pangs to the vast theatre of life to which his friends point his gaze. And as he looks, the most disquieting and most appalling of all visions, one that had crossed his view once or twice already¹ for an agonising moment, comes back and stands before him arrayed in all its terrors. Dark thoughts stir within him. They cloud his eyes, and shake for a while a faith against which all the malice of Satan had spent itself in vain.

'Listen, listen quietly,' he says, 'to my words. Let your silence give me ease: your speech brings none. Then, when I have spoken, mock my misery, Zophar, if thou canst. It is not to man I make my moan. I have reason, terrible reason, for my impatient words.'

ver. 2-4.

'Mark me,' he says, 'and lay your hands, glib pleaders for God's providence, upon your mouths in awe-struck silence.

ver. 5.

¹ ix. 22-24. xii. 6.

LECTURE VI. For me, even as I speak, a shudder comes across me,
and *horror taketh hold of my flesh ;* and well it may !

Chap. xxi. *Wherefore, he asks, do the wicked live,*
ver. 6, 7. *Become old, yea, wax mighty in power ?*

ver. 8-10. ' Their seed is established, their families founded before
their eyes, all goes well with them, their wealth increases, all
prosper ; '

ver. 11. *They send forth their little ones like a flock,*
And their children dance.

ver. 12. *They sing to the timbrel and harp,*
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.

We see, beneath the Eastern imagery, the picture of the
prosperous and powerful family in all lands and ages,
founded in violence, or by fraud and wrong. ' *They* do
not see their children die,' says the childless parent. ' *They*
are stretched upon no rack of lingering pain,' says the
tortured leper.

ver. 13. *They spend their days in prosperity,*
And in a (painless) moment they go down to the grave.

ver. 14. 15. And this though they have neglected or defied their Maker.
What is the Almighty, they have said, that we should
serve him ?

And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him ?

' Well know I,' he says too, ' *that their prosperity is not in*
their own hands. It comes, must come, from God ; and
ver. 16. *their impiety I abhor. The counsel of the wicked is far*
from me. Yes, *I* abhor, but where is God's abhorrence
shewn ? '

ver. 17. *How oft, he asks the despairing question, How oft is*
it that the lamp of the wicked is put out ?
That their calamity cometh upon them ?

‘How oft is it,

That God distributeth sorrows in his anger?

That they are as stubble before the wind,

And as chaff that the storm carrieth away?’

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Chap. xxi.
ver. 18.

‘The Psalmist’s words,’ we might imagine him to say, as with a glance at many psalms, ‘your words, may come true at times; but how terribly often is the reverse the true picture of human life.’ ‘Vain,’ again he says, ‘to tell me that man’s wrong doing will be visited on his children;’

ver. 19.

Let his own eyes see his destruction,

ver. 20.

And let him drink himself of the wrath of the Almighty.

‘When once the thread of life is cut,

When the number of his months is cut off in the midst,

ver. 21.

what pleasure, what concern, hath the evil-doer in that unfelt future?’

‘Vain for you to try to *teach God*, the Judge who rules the very heavens, by holding up a perfect law, and calling it His! Look at life!’ And he puts before their eyes a picture of the terrible inequalities, the baffling injustices of the world. His words suggest the opening scene of Dives and Lazarus—the opening scene without its sequel. Are we listening to a Saint and Patriarch, or to some preacher of anarchy who is trying to madden a starving crowd by pictures of the contrasts between the rich and the poor? ‘It is not for a time only that the contrast lasts, it endures till the very end of all, till death.’

ver. 22.

One dieth in his full strength,

ver. 23, 25.

Being wholly at ease and quiet.

And another dieth in bitterness of soul,

And never tasteth of good.

They lie down alike in the dust,

ver. 26.

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And the worm covereth them.

Chap. xxi. 'I know,' he goes on to say, 'the meaning of your words ;
ver. 26-28. that your pictures of desolate hearths and overthrown
palaces are aimed at me, seated here in misery by the ruins
of my home. But step out of the narrow experience of your
own tribe, of which you speak so proudly ; ask those who
ver. 29. have travelled far, and read the destiny of man under other
skies. They will tell you,' he seems to say, 'of many
ver. 30, 33. an evil doer spared in the day of doom ; erect when others fall
around him. None can question or call him to account in
life ; he is laid at last to rest in a tomb of honour ; his effigy,'
'he seems to add, 'keeps watch over his remains. Yea,
softly lies the earth upon his grave ; *the clods of the valley
shall be sweet unto him*, as he shares the common lot of
the millions who went before him, of the millions who shall
follow ;' or it may be, 'as his body is laid in its tomb, preceded
and followed by thousands who do him honour.'

ver. 34. 'Ah, what avails,' he cries, 'your comfort, which leaves but
the sense that it is all hollow, all a false reading of the page
of life?' So he ends what is, in some ways, the very gloomiest
of all Job's utterances. You will see why I say this. It is not
that he cries so loud in his own personal anguish as he has
done before. Indeed there is not a word of his own pains,
bodily, mental, or spiritual, in the whole chapter. They
seem forgotten, quite lost in the deeper gloom that is
gathering so closely round his soul. He no longer cries,
My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? There is that
within him, that would forbid even this sacred cry to pass his
lips. If He, who rules the world, habitually leaves it to
misrule, if it is a world in which favour is lavished on the
bad, and the tide of misery flows at random on his best

servants, what avails the complaint, the prayer, the appeal, the cry?

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The righteous must hold on his way, in gloom and darkness. He must do what he can, bear what he can of his burden of sorrow or of doubt. For clouds and darkness are around him, and his eye cannot pierce to the sky that lies behind!

Chap. xxi.

And here, my friends, we must needs leave him for awhile in his gloom. He caught but lately, caught for a moment, a glimpse of a better hope; of a God who would reveal Himself as his friend and champion even in, even after, death. It was so far exceedingly precious; but it was, as we saw, a mere fitful gleam of personal hope, born of intense and personal clinging to the God, 'Who is not the God of the dead but of the living;' it was like flashes which came from time to time to Psalmist after Psalmist¹. That sure and certain hope of a general resurrection, that sense that we see here but a part of the great order of the Universe, was no sure part of the heritage that had come down to that ancient Patriarch. He had to fight the battle against pain and doubt, and the misdirected teaching of his friends, without the promise that in his Father's house were many mansions, and that beyond the gate of death lay the entrance to another world. He had no spectacle before him of One who had trodden the path of defeat, and death, and shame, and pain, and yet had been unspeakably dear to God His Father. He knew not that, as his earlier submissiveness and resignation had won the attention of the dwellers in other spheres than earth, so his wild complaints could win the sympathy and touch the heart of far distant ages. He knew not, but he was soon to

¹ Ps. xvii. 16; xlix. 15; lxxiii. 25.

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be taught, that his Heavenly Father looked gently on his erring child; on his wild perplexity and despairing words; and that the spark of faith, which would not be extinguished, was infinitely dear in that Father's sight. *We* know this as we leave him for awhile in his hour of trial.

I have asked you, my friends, to travel far to-day, it may be too far. But I was anxious that you should reach before we parted the very heart of this great tragedy; that you should penetrate into the inmost secrets of that valley of the Shadow of Death through which Job is being led by an unseen hand, an unfelt guidance. Before us lies an untrodden region, the remaining portion of this marvellous book. It contains chapters rich in varied interest, in passages of tragic pathos, in rapid bursts of lyrical poetry, in calm, majestic, and stately utterances, in vivid pictures of a world that has passed away. But I have taxed your attention long enough; and for the present may be well content if any here have recognised something of the wealth of thought, of teaching, and of wisdom, that may lie buried in a single portion of that most familiar of volumes which we call the Bible.

December 19, 1885.

* * * With this lecture ended the first course of weekly Lectures on Job, given in the Abbey towards the close of 1885. Those which follow form a second series, and were delivered, not as originally intended, at a corresponding period of 1886, but at an earlier date. To this second course the following Lecture was introductory.

LECTURE VII.

LECTURE VII.

1. General view of the contents of the Book.
2. Question of its authorship, age, and aim.
3. Its interpretation in early and more recent times.
4. The difficulties of the language in which it is written.

I BELIEVE that I am carrying out the wishes of some of those whom I address by resuming at once our study, our joint study, let me rather say, of the Book of Job, instead of waiting, as was my first intention, for the close of the year on which we have so lately entered. But before taking up the thread of the great argument which we have so far followed steadily to the close of chapter xxi, we shall, I think, do well to-day to consider two or three questions which were either merely glanced at, or designedly passed by, when first we met here. And first of all, we have not, I hope, advanced so far as to make a short and clear analysis of the contents of the whole Book, other than useful and welcome to many of my hearers. You will forgive me if a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable. I will state the matter as briefly and as clearly as possible.

The book consists, as a glance will show you, of forty-two chapters.

And these chapters, when looked at more attentively, divide themselves readily and naturally into five parts of unequal length. We may call them Acts, or Books, or Parts, or Sections. I have already given you reasons which make it difficult to class the whole work, from a merely literary point

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LECTURE of view, as either, strictly speaking, a Dramatic, or an
 VII. Epic, or a Didactic Poem¹.

And of these five divisions, the two shortest, the first and the last, are written in prose. They, and they only, are so printed in the Revised Version, in order to distinguish them from the long Poem, in three distinct parts, which they introduce and close. And in these two short portions, the prose Introduction and the prose Conclusion, in these, and in these only, the Author speaks in his own person. In the rest, in the Poem which forms the body of the work, he speaks to us only through the lips of the six different interlocutors, or *dramatis personæ*, who each and all speak in the original in the language and form of poetry. By this I mean that they use the form, not merely of poetical prose, but of genuine Hebrew versification. Of the nature of this I have already spoken². The only exceptions are the short occasional lines or verses in which, from time to time, the separate speakers are introduced. We have, therefore, five parts or divisions; *two*, by far the shortest, in the form of prose; *three*, of unequal length, in that of poetry. The first of these parts, the first two chapters, we have already gone through with something of the attention which they claimed. You will remember that they comprised a series of separate scenes, laid now on Earth, now in Heaven, by the aid of which were gathered together, within the short compass of some five and thirty verses, the materials of one great and moving tragedy. And this tragedy, which has set its mark on the literature and current phraseology of many ages and nations, falls itself, as we can easily see, like many more fully developed tragedies of later literature, into five separate parts or acts. We had *first* the

Chapters
 i, ii.
 Job's Trial.

¹ See above, pp. 13-15.

² See above, p. 11.

picture of Job, surrounded by his patriarchal family, presenting the highest type of human goodness and human prosperity. He was *the greatest of all the children of the East* for prosperity, and *there was none like him on the earth* for goodness. And, *secondly*, we were transported to the Courts of Heaven, and allowed to read the secret of the tragic tale that was to follow. Its purpose, the sifting and testing of the patriarch's character, as a matter of the deepest interest to other than human circles, was clearly disclosed to us. And in the *third* act the curtain was raised once more on scenes from Arab life. We saw a series of overwhelming calamities fall suddenly and almost simultaneously on the hapless hero of the drama. We saw him stand the test, and come out unconquered. And, *fourthly*, we were once more lifted up into the presence of Jehovah. We heard the result questioned, and the fiat go forth for a further trial. And in the *fifth* act we saw the furnace of affliction heated sevenfold, and Job come out once more, finally, as it seemed, and definitely victorious. We watched him bear each successive blow, not merely with a sobriety and evenness of mind for which a Stoic philosopher, or a Mahomedan saint, might have sighed in vain, but with a sweet and dutiful submissiveness to the will of God, which has made him the traditional type and model to all ages of that form of resignation which is popularly called *patience*. So closed, or seemed to close, the tragedy of Job's story. Are there any pages in the whole world of literature, in which so rich and varied a series of pictures is gathered into so small a compass, without causing a moment's sense of undue compression or inartistic incompleteness?

But at its close, or what seemed its close, there are added a few verses, a fresh or sixth scene, which form

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The
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the transition to the great poem, to the long and unbroken dialogue in verse, to which this tragedy in prose is after all but the introduction. It is the scene in which we have described to us the visit of three chiefs—sons of the East, they too, like Job himself—who came from far to mourn with their afflicted friend in his hour of trouble.

So far we have not the Poem itself, but the first portion of the Book, the introduction to the Poem which is to follow.

Chapters
iii-xxxi.
The Dia-
logue.

And in Chapter iii we saw the form of the Book change. We passed at one step from Prose to Poetry. Job and his friends have been placed on the stage. Hints have been given that the far off Courts of Heaven are interested in the little circle that gathers round that Arab dunghheap. And there follows a Dialogue between the sufferer and those who have come to comfort him. And it is this Dialogue that forms the longest portion, the heart and kernel, of the book. It extends over twenty-nine chapters. Job is still its central figure. It begins with the first verse of the third chapter, *After this Job opened his mouth*; it ends with, *The words of Job are ended*, at the close of the thirty-first.

And this Dialogue, or Drama, is extremely symmetrical and carefully planned. Job speaks first; and then each of the friends steps forward and speaks in turn, and each is answered in turn and separately by Job; and this takes place three times over. You might, by introducing a pause, of which, however, there is no trace in the poem itself, easily divide the dialogue into three separate scenes. It was at the close of the second of these scenes, at the end of Chapter xxi, that we paused when last we met here. We shall begin the third scene, or third cycle of speeches, on Saturday next. Only we shall find that in this last scene one of the three

friends has disappeared, as though silenced, or convinced that words are useless; and Job will wind up the dialogue with a long monologue, divided into three separate parts by a line of prose, in which, after the first few verses, he will leave his friends entirely aside. He will assume the attitude, so far as they are concerned, of master of the field, addressing himself to God, and to Him only.

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Chapters
xxvi-xxxi.
Job's Mon-
ologue.

Of the nature of this Dialogue, and of the part played by his friends and by Job, enough has been already said. You have not forgotten that the speakers, the three friends on one side, Job on the other, drift farther from each other at every step, as the plot, if we may so speak, of the drama steadily unfolds itself. You remember how, with growing force and increased peremptoriness, they urge the view that God is absolutely righteous, and dispenses happiness and misery, even here on earth, not arbitrarily, but with perfect justice, and that Job's only hope of restoration and happiness is to confess, and to repent of, the sins of his former life. And you remember the growing torture and agony with which Job, trained in the same creed, yet strong in the memory and consciousness of his former life, receives their language. You have not forgotten how, writhing under the sense of his own misery and of his friends' hints and accusations, he passes beyond the sphere of his own exceeding bitter sufferings, and faces the whole problem of life's baffling riddles. We had before us no longer *Job the patient*, but Job as the agonised, tortured, rebellious, clamorous, pathetic questioner; clinging to a God who seems to his darkened vision to be a God of misrule, and who yet, deep down in his soul he feels it, is and must be, a Just God and a Holy. And we shall soon follow him and his friends to the close of the great dialogue, to the

Chapters
iii-xxxi.
The
Dialogue.

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end of what we might call the *second part* of the book, treating the Prologue, or first tragedy of Job, as the first. It leaves these three good men, and the good Job, facing each other, standing amidst the ruins of their former friendship, all sympathy and union gone, any hope of agreement further off than ever. And then, when all seems ripe for the final and decisive intervention of the Great Judge, there will come what will seem a strange pause in the action of the drama, in the progress of the Poem.

Chapters
xxxii—
xxxvii.
Elihu.

A fresh speaker, unnamed before, unnoticed afterwards, steps forward from among the bystanders. He belongs, we are expressly told, to a younger generation than Job and his friends. He blames both. The position which he maintains in the six chapters throughout which he will speak at length, pausing at times to challenge Job for a reply, but winning no answer, we shall consider in due time. It is enough to say that in this, the speech or speeches of Elihu, from the thirty-second to the end of the thirty-seventh chapter, we have the *third part* or division of the Book. And with the thirty-eighth chapter, Jehovah himself, riding on the whirlwind, shrouded in the storm of which the Psalmist speaks as his veil and covering, appears on the scene.

Chapters
xxxviii—
xlii. 6.
Jehovah.

But His voice is heard, not in thunder or in tempest, but in human accents. Through four more chapters, from the thirty-eighth to the close of the forty-first, he will speak face to face with Job. Once during his speech, once more at its close, we have words, on each occasion words of profound self-abasement, from Job. And with these the *fourth division* of the Book ends, and, as a glance at the Revised Version will show, the poetical portion is brought to a close at the end of the sixth verse of the last chapter. But there

remains a *fifth part*, a short but exceedingly important and interesting section. A Conclusion, too essential a portion to be called an Epilogue, is added in prose. And in this Conclusion we shall read what, to those who have carefully weighed Job's language, will be, to say the least, suggestive of much thought and consideration. We shall be told how Jehovah justifies Job, not of course for his earlier submissiveness—that needed no justification—but for his language in the dialogue with his friends; justifies him, and condemns his friends. *I have not*, we shall read, *spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.* And the book ends with a short account of Job's restoration to more than his former prosperity; to doubled wealth, to peaceful life and lengthened days.

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Chapter
xlii. 1-17.
The Con-
clusion.

I have put before you, as I might have done at an earlier stage, this summary or sketch of the contents of the book which we are studying. Of the problems which it discusses I have already said, and shall have to say, so much that I will add no word at present. But there are still one or two topics on which you would, I feel sure, be glad of a few words before we return to the actual text of the book itself.

There is the exceedingly interesting question, perhaps the very first which would occur to a modern theological or literary student, that of the *authorship* of the book, or rather of the *age* in which it was written. There was a time when such a question would have been at once set aside as of no real moment or interest. 'It is as superfluous, as impertinent,' said the foremost voice in Western Christendom thirteen centuries ago, 'as to ask what pen some great man had used when he wrote a letter which lies before us. The book is the work of the Holy Spirit, and its pages are

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in our hands. The name, nationality, or age, of the human instrument through which the utterances of that Spirit have reached us is a matter of no moment. The inquiry is waste of time, and savours even of irreverence¹. Yet such an answer will hardly satisfy those who, while humbly recognising the beneficent work of God's Spirit in the gradual and growing revelation made to the human spirit in the books of the Old Testament, yet feel the deepest interest in tracing the history of that Revelation, in studying it alike in its successive stages, and from its human side. They will absolutely decline to look on the individual portions of that Revelation, the separate books of that 'Sacred Library,' as a Father of the Church called it, as devoid each of its own character, its own place, its own teaching, and its own history.

Yet the question which I have suggested as regards the Book of Job is one which it is impossible to answer with any certainty. The riddle has never been solved. There is not a hint in the book itself as to its author. The vague traditions that have reached us can hardly be called traditions; they are little beyond the guesses or the assertions of this Rabbi, or that Father, uttered centuries after the book had formed a part of the Jewish canon, and resting on no secure foundation of any kind. Its date has been carried back into ages anterior to the very origin of the Hebrew or the Greek alphabet, when the literature of the 'wisdom of the Egyptians' was written in hieroglyphics upon stone or papyrus. Some, again, have held that it was born beneath Arab tents, and received its Jewish form from Moses during his long sojourn with his Arabian father-in-law; or that even earlier, Jacob brought it back, with his two wives, his

¹ See note at the end of this Lecture, p. 183.

children, his flocks and herds, from the land of Laban. Others have looked for its author at the court of Solomon, and have even ventured to attempt to identify him with one of the Psalmists of that age¹. On the other hand, its composition has been carried down to the Babylonian exile, and even to the days of Ezra, and the return from the Captivity. And each and any of these conflicting theories is as fully compatible as the others with the deepest reverence for the contents of the book, and with the profoundest sense of the greatness of its teaching. The birthday of what has been called the most splendid flower of Hebrew poetry, of what some have called the greatest poem in the world, has been sought for up and down among the centuries, and no certain conclusion has yet been reached. 'It is a point,' says one among the best and the latest of the commentators on Job, 'on which even this omniscient age must be content to remain in doubt².'

You will notice that in our own Bibles it stands first among that series of Books which divides the Prophets from the Sacred Historians. It takes precedence there even of the Book of Psalms, which from the sanctity attached to the name of David, and from its early use in Jewish worship, appears at times to have given its name to the third division of Holy Scripture, which is spoken of as consisting of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms³, though more usually, in the New Testament, as the Law (or Moses), and the Prophets.

And this place, no doubt, was assigned to it from the prevailing impression of its extreme antiquity. Nor can we

¹ See Godet, *Études Bibliques*, p. 193.

² Introduction to Dr. A. B. Davidson's excellent *Commentary on Job*.

³ Cf. St. Luke xxiv. 44.

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wonder at this. I have already called your attention more than once to the entire and remarkable absence of any reference in its pages to Jewish History, or to the traditions, the institutions, or the localities, of the Land of Palestine¹. It is hardly necessary to enlarge further on this subject. We have felt at every page, we shall feel it even more as we read on, that we are breathing quite another atmosphere than that of the hills and vallies of the land of David. And we can readily understand how naturally the belief arose that the almost entire absence of any Jewish colouring in the scenery, either of the Poem itself, or of its introduction or its close, was due to its great antiquity. If it came down from the days of some Arab sage, or even from the pen of Moses, familiar alike with the civilisation and marvels of Egypt, and with the patriarchal life of Arabia, the difficulty seems solved at once. We have a work written before the very origin of the Mosaic Law, before the thunders of Sinai had been heard, or the conquest of Palestine had been dreamed of. It is no wonder that in the very earliest poem, written in any widely intelligible language, which is in possession of our race, there should be no reference to events which, old as they seem to us, had not yet sprung from the womb of time.

It is a most interesting and attractive theory. It held its ground for ages. I feel, I confess, a pang at finding myself forced, even, I might almost say, against my will, to abandon it. How striking to think that the chapters which we have been and shall be reading—those outpourings of thought and feeling, so fresh and vivid, that it has been truly said that the ink with which they are written seems hardly dry—had come down to us through such an enormous lapse of centuries, from a mind

¹ See above, p. 7.

that had faced these world-old, yet still modern problems, in the days when Pyramids were rising from the low level of the Nile valley, when the Sphinx was yet uncarved—in the era of a civilisation that was old when the tale of the Trojan War was yet unsung, when Greece and Rome were yet unborn. You feel, I am sure, as I do, a wish that we could believe it to be true.

But the arguments on the other side have left few thoughtful supporters of this view at the present time. It is not merely that the language in which the book is written is not, we are assured, that of the oldest extant form of Hebrew, but, at the very earliest, that not of the morning but of the high noon of Jewish literature. It is not merely that the author, when speaking in his own person, speaks invariably of God by the name in which he was revealed to Moses¹ as the Covenant God of the people of Israel; nor merely that he seems to have been familiar, if not with many other portions of the Old Testament, certainly with at least one Psalm²; or that expressions occur, such as that of *Ophir*, as the recognised name for gold, which would have been inconceivable before, at the very earliest, the reign of Solomon. It is more than this. The very problem which the book discusses, the riddle which vexes the soul of Job, is not one which springs into full life, or would form the subject of a long and studied, an intensely argued and elaborate discussion, in any early or simple stage of a nation's progress. The work is clearly by a Hebrew. It bears no signs of being a translation. The stamp of originality is on every page. When, or where, could a Hebrew have found a place for such a work in the infancy of his nation? The struggle between a traditional Creed which told him that all suffering was a

¹ Exodus iii. 14.

² See above, p. 68.

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penalty for actual sin, all prosperity a reward for goodness, and the spectacle of undeserved suffering as seen in the world of a more complex experience—the question of the inherent value and sacredness of goodness in itself, as apart from the outward or inward happiness which it brings—the very character of the awful Ruler of the Universe, His *justice* and His *goodness* as distinct from his sovereignty and greatness—these are scarcely problems which would force themselves, like armed intruders, on the human soul, in the simpler and earlier stages of social or national progress. We smile as we read the assertions of doctor after doctor of the Jewish or Christian Church, that the awful questionings, which you and I have faced and shall face in the words of the tortured Job, were read to comfort oppressed and ignorant bondsmen in the slave gangs of Egypt; or to cheer the ‘stiffnecked’ tribes of half civilised wanderers in the forty years of their desert life. How little can those who tell us so have faced the full meaning of the largest and the central portion of the book. The elements doubtless of such perplexities may have existed from the day when the blood of some unavenged successor of righteous Abel cried in vain for retribution. But we can hardly imagine that their full and elaborate discussion would have found voice or echo or hearing, still less enshrined itself in a nation’s sacred literature, till a sadder and more perplexing experience had opened men’s eyes to darker and more tangled thoughts than come to the childhood of nations. God’s spirit does not transport men out of their own epoch. Great men may mould their age, may see further than their contemporaries, but they are moulded also by, are the children of, their age. And they are not summoned to do their work till the ‘fulness of time’ has come. Great and lofty as are

the utterances, profound as are the thoughts of the Book of Job, they would have, may we not say, been 'born out of due time,' till the problems with which they deal had been brought home to the hearts of thinkers by familiarity with much unexplained and inexplicable suffering, by long and painful musing over the mysteries and riddles, let me use the phrase once more, of human life. To myself, I own, that to look for the spiritual conflicts of Job in the dawn of the national life of Israel, is like demanding the revelations of modern science, astronomical, geological, or physiological, in the teaching of Moses.

Yet if we set aside this earlier date, we must still suspend our judgment. We shall still be left to set conjecture against conjecture, theory against theory. Shall we say that this great work is the ripe and golden fruit of the days of Solomon? that its seed-bed was the rush, the first and fertilising inrush, of new ideas and widening influences that poured in upon the Hebrew race as, for a moment in its long history, it rose to something of an imperial position; as the Vine that was brought out of Egypt 'sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river'¹? Did a school of writers spring up at the court of the wise Monarch, who like him strained after a wider range of thought than the tight trammels of their national system could embrace? who tried to look on man as the child of Adam, not merely as the son of Israel? And did one of these searchers after the Wisdom which is personified in the Book of Proverbs, and whose praises we shall find sung in a marvellous lyric through a chapter which we have yet to study, rise 'to the height of the great argument' of this book, and leave to his race and to

¹ Ps. lxxx. 8, 11.

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mankind the immortal legacy of this magnificent monument of the golden, the Augustan age, of the Hebrew monarchy? Was the author whom we are now studying one of those who saw rise from the ground the solid fabric of the mighty temple which his own mighty work was to outlive by centuries upon centuries? *Exegitne monumentum aere perennius?* Or shall we rather say that we see traces of a deeper sadness, of a more melancholy and perplexing, of a more brooding and longer gathered, experience of the darker side of human life and human history, than was compatible with the heyday of the nation's early manhood, with the full pulse of life that must have throbbled in its veins in the bright days of Solomon? Shall we, in the entire absence of external evidence, lean rather to the thought that he who was to give a voice to the most agonising questions which can perplex the soul of the human thinker, was born into a sadder and more sombre age, less sunlit skies, a more clouded and stormy atmosphere? Shall we say that he lived late enough to have seen wave after wave of trouble beat against the divided and worn, the much tried and weary remnants of that shortlived empire? Had his nation's life, in its long passage down the sad declivity of suffering and decay, brought home to his own burdened brain questions which would have sat lightly on the glad heart of the poet and thinker of an earlier age? Had some such son of Abraham brooded over the woes of his own race, till the sharpest pangs of suffering humanity had been worked into his life-blood, and become part and parcel of his own individual experience? We may think, at least for a moment, of our inspired poet, as one who had watched and pondered some portion at least of human history. He had seen calamities strike, not nations only as punishments for national sins,

but visit indiscriminately the individuals who compose them, the units in those aggregations of units which together make up the family of nations. He had seen them fall alike, deserved or undeserved, on the most innocent and the most guilty. Such an one we can conceive to have suffered much himself; and the intense and unapproachable sadness in which not a few of his utterances are steeped, may be the echo of feelings that had haunted his own soul, as he too was tried and proved in the slow fires—may we Englishmen never know them—alike of a patriot's humiliation and of personal affliction. And he had learned, we may believe, much in that stern school of shame and suffering, and from the feelings and thoughts borne in upon the soul of such a thinker from the spectacle of a world in misery. And he had found peace at last—not in a return to a belief in which he could no longer find a resting place, and whose powerlessness to bring tranquillity he exhibits in every page that we have read or shall read—not in any philosophical mastery of questions against which the human intellect has beaten itself in vain for ages—not in a gloomy pessimism which accepts the inevitable with the cold smile of hopelessness—but in that reposeful and trustful attitude towards the wisdom and the goodness of an unseen God, which is after all the one great and final lesson of the Book of Job.

In what dark hour of his nation's story did these sad experiences haunt his vision? Did they come to some survivor of the final fall of Samaria, of the crash of the Northern Kingdom? to one who, driven by storms of war from his ancient home, had wandered far, travelled much, observed much, suffered much, meditated much? Did some such exile paint in the calmer evening of his life the agonies of his own darker hours, as seen in the peaceful light of

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resignation and of faith? Or was it one who had outlived a sharper pang, had seen the sacred walls of Jerusalem levelled with the dust; who had heard the cry of Edom in the day of doom, and had wept with the captive exiles by the waters of Babylon? Did he, one or other of such sorrow-taught sons of Abraham, seize on a name, even then ancient, a name which we see from a verse in Ezekiel¹ had already grown into a tradition for piety and goodness; and did he embody the higher teaching, teaching beyond his age, which God's Spirit had breathed into his own soul, in scenes purposely and designedly detached from the events and associations that bounded the narrow horizon of his own age and nation? Did he try to summon those to whom he spoke into a serener atmosphere than that of the troubled skies and driving mists that met their eye?

One more question. Did he whose legacy to the ages that were to follow was this immortal tale of 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' whose friends despised his moans and hid from him their faces—one against whose guiltless head such a sea of troubles seems to roll and break—did he see in him not only the one figure which he drew, but also a personification in him of all the unexplained and mysterious woes of suffering humanity? And did he see something more? Does there stand behind the figure of Job any shadow of all that was most sacred in the present and the future destiny of his own race—made to possess, to inherit, like Job, the bitter fruits of 'the sins of its youth?' And more still. Have we in these chapters a sister-image to that of the 'servant of God,' who, in those later and profounder Chapters that bear the name of Isaiah,

¹ xiv. 14.² xiii. 27.

represents, now the suffering remnant of God's people, now a form, shrouded and mysterious, but bearing a mould and type that was to find its true fulfilment in One who, centuries later, was to drink the very dregs of the cup of suffering, and through all those sufferings to be infinitely dear to the God by whose gracious will he was afflicted¹? We ask and ask these questions. And as we ask the interest grows, and we would fain pierce the darkness, fain speak with the easy dogmatism of this or that Hebrew Rabbi, this or that Father, or Doctor, of the Christian Church. But we have no certain answer; and the age, and the authorship, and much of the history of this mysterious book is veiled in almost impenetrable darkness.

And now, long as I have already detained you, I should like to add a few words on a question that will, I feel sure, have a real interest in the eyes of many here. How is it that a curtain seems to have hung so long over so much of the real meaning and purport of the Book of Job? Is there not something that savours of presumption in using language, such as you have heard me venture to use, which implies that the present generation has found its way to the true teaching and essential lessons of the book, in a manner and to a degree which was denied to the great teachers of Christendom in former ages? You can easily imagine the sneer with which such a claim might be set aside.

And indeed the question requires an answer; but that answer is a very simple one.

Those teachers of whom I speak took a totally different

¹ See on this question an interesting essay in vol. ii. of Professor Cheyne's *Prophecies of Isaiah*.

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view of the whole design, nature, and value of the book which we are studying, indeed, I may say of the whole Old Testament Scriptures, to that in the light of which we have attempted to deal with its contents.

To them the Book of Job was above all things a great allegory. As such the Christian student was to treat it. It was not his business, certainly not his first and primary duty, to inquire into the direct and literal meaning of what lay before him, and to expect to find by this process the teaching that marked a single stage in God's progressive and gradual revelation of truth to the world. What he had to study was a mystical narrative, in each separate verse, in every word, of which was wrapped up another meaning to that which the words conveyed. It was this other meaning, this prophetic, symbolical, and mystical sense, not the mere integument of language in which it was swathed and concealed, which the devout reader was called on to explore. His duty was not to expound what lay before him, but to search diligently beneath its surface for types, foreshadowings, analogies to the ideas or the truths which he had brought with him to the study, or to the facts and persons of the world which was familiar to him. Let me take as, for our own subject, the most signal of all instances, the famous work of the Great Gregory, Bishop of Rome, from 590 A.D. to 604 A.D. He was no imaginative Greek, no fanciful dreamer, but a Roman Patrician of ancient race, a Prætor of Rome before his conversion, a great statesman, and a great Pope. To him, to his apostolic zeal, to his masterly sagacity, and untiring energy, we owe the mission of Augustin, the founding of the Metropolitan See of Canterbury, in a word the conversion of a great portion of

our own heathen forefathers of England, properly so called, to the Christian Faith. Yet in his voluminous work on Job you will find, after you have read the first few pages, hardly ten consecutive lines of what we should call interpretation of the text as it stood before him. He says expressly that the sense of its contents is quite other than what lies on the surface: *aliud intimant, aliud sonant*. Job is to him no mere historical personage, or the leading character in a sublime and inspired poem, least of all an Arab chief. He is a representative, now of the Christ who was to come, now of the true Church which He was to found. The man who is introduced as dwelling in the Land of Uz is no Eastern Patriarch. The opening words, which seem to describe him as such, are written with another object than to specify the name and country of any inhabitant of earth. They convey, to those who can read them aright, the higher truth of Christ dwelling in the hearts of the wise. His three friends may to the eye of sense be Eastern Chiefs, Arab Sheikhs. To the pious reader they are the heretics who, in the first ages of Christendom, beset and imperilled Catholic Truth. Job's seven sons are, now the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, now, by a strange rearrangement of numbers, they are the twelve apostles, preaching the Adorable Trinity in the four quarters of the globe. The sheep, the camels, the oxen, the asses, represent different classes; the true disciples, the Gentiles, the Jews, the Samaritans. All is allegory; every word and every act is symbolical. And more than this. Every word that Job says is dictated by the Holy Spirit. We must not dream of his having spoken rashly or overvehemently or audaciously for a moment. *He who says he erred says God erred*; and his wild cries, his daring questionings, are merely forms,

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misleading forms, in which the Holy Spirit has concealed the most gracious truths, the most pregnant teaching, the most unerring prophecies¹. The friends, on the other hand, he tells us, if ever they speak a word of truth, only do so because they have learned something from their long converse² with the saintly Job. And while they represent the heretics, Elihu is the type, not of the avowed heretic, but of the arrogant and misleading teacher within the Church.

Yet St. Gregory was a great thinker and a great man. And we Englishmen, who remember how, and with what great results, he found a deeper meaning in words heard in a Roman slave market³, though we would approach the book on which he built up his great work in a profoundly different attitude, shall not be surprised to find great thoughts and noble lessons side by side with a mode of interpretation, once universal, that seems to us to belong to a world of thought that has passed away; passed away, never, we may feel sure, to return in the form which once it wore. I have spoken to you of one who lived between the early and the middle ages of the Church. Let us pass on, at a single step, to the very last century. To Bishop Warburton⁴ the book is a historical parable of a very different kind. Job is the Jewish people, released from their Captivity, and for the first time living the ordinary life of other nations. Up to the Captivity, he supposes them, indeed the theory lies at the

¹ See note at the end of this Lecture, p. 183.

² For a passage in which Gregory somewhat modifies this view, see note to p. 97.

³ See the story as told in Stanley's *Memorials of Canterbury*, or Bright's *Early English Church*.

⁴ In the 'Divine Legation of Moses.'

very basis of his great work, to have lived under a special dispensation of their own. The 'Divine Legation of Moses,' the older dispensation, which lasted to the Babylonian Captivity, dispensed, he says, entirely with any doctrine of future rewards or punishments. And why? Because God ruled that one nation and its individual citizens under a system which gave to the nation and to its children their rewards in this life. With the Captivity that system came to an end; and the Book of Job represents the trials and agonies of the Jewish nation when first launched upon the new experiences of a world whose wrongs will be redressed, whose imperfections remedied, in another sphere of life, another world. With Bishop Warburton, Job is the Jewish nation. Job's wife represents the foreign wives of whom we read in the Book of Ezra. The three friends are Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, the three implacable enemies of the returned exiles. Elihu represents the Prophets, Ezra is the author.

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You smile as you listen to such a theory. Yet its author at least laid his hand on the real and central problem of the book—the perplexity caused to the human soul by the sight of affliction falling on the innocent. For my own part, I would rather study the book under such guidance, which, with all its fringe of absurdity, yet at least recognises the true meaning of the position which Job holds through speech after speech, chapter after chapter, than under that of those who, as the great mass of the commentators who follow him, absolutely ignore the most striking and characteristic and longest portion of the Book, and tell us that it was written to hold up to our eyes Job as an example of unbroken patience and humility, or to reveal to his own age the secret of

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another life. Whatever else is right, this we feel is wrong. Better, it seems to me, to treat the book as a mere prophetic vehicle for thoughts quite other than it expresses; better to find in it a mere riddling historical parable, than to profess to expound it as it stands, and yet so wholly to misread its meaning and purpose.

May I add one word more? The Hebrew of the Book of Job is exceedingly difficult. St. Jerome in the fourth century complains that, having engaged a Jewish Rabbi's help, and having laboured long with him, he knew at the end what he knew before, and nothing more. Luther, whose few words on the book are as keensighted as they are precious, speaks in his own quaint way of the difficulties of the Hebrew. 'Job,' he says, 'is suffering more from my version than from the taunts of his friends, and would prefer his dunghill to my translation of his lamentations.' But the difficulty of the Hebrew consists very largely in the number of words which, as they do not occur again in the Old Testament writings, long baffled all attempts to translate them. But even for the last hundred and fifty years, and still more for the last half century, the difficulty has been greatly lessened by bringing to bear on these unknown words and phrases the light gained by a careful study of kindred dialects of the sister language, Arabic, the other great daughter of the parent Semitic stock. It is as though ages hence, when Modern European tongues had become dead languages, a number of French words which had defied the attempts of future scholars, familiar only with the surviving literature of that tongue, had surrendered their meaning when challenged by those who had been able to study their cognate words in Italian or in Spanish, or some other of the Romance languages.

We have here one of the great causes of what I venture to call the immeasurable superiority of our Revised Version of Job, as compared with the older translation. The scholars of the present day are enabled to explore a mine which was absolutely closed to the Divines of the Reformation and of earlier ages.

I must bring this long, far too long, lecture to a close. I rejoice to think that on this day week we may hope no longer to search for the age or the history of him who speaks to us in the pages which we shall read: but that we shall once more sit at his feet and listen to his words, once more watch the measure and the fashion in which God's Holy Spirit spoke to his servants of old.

February 6, 1886.

Note to pages 168 and 179.

I have, I hope, not overstated St. Gregory's view. I quote a few of his words. *Quis hæc scripserit, valde supervacue quaeritur, cum tamen auctor libri Spiritus Sanctus fideliter credatur. Ipse igitur hæc scripsit qui scribenda dictavit, &c.* The comparison to the pen used by a great writer follows in the same chapter, *Praefatio*, Cap. ii.

His language in his prefatory letter to Leander of Seville as to his mode of interpretation is exceedingly interesting. Nothing can illustrate more forcibly the gulf that separates the exegesis of his age from our own than his remarks on the objections to merely literal interpretations, and the instances which he gives. So again in his *Praefatio*, Cap. iii. 7, we read: *Et quidem quaedam verba responsionum illius imperitis lectoribus, aspera sonant, quia sanctorum dicta pie intelligere, sicut dicuntur, ignorant.* I may refer my readers to a translation of the whole work in the 'Library of the Fathers,' published by Parker and Rivington.

LECTURE VIII.

CHAPTERS XXII—XXV.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. XXII—XXV.) *

- 22** Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
2 Can a man be profitable unto God?
Surely he that is wise is profitable unto himself.
3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?
Or is it gain *to him*, that thou makest thy ways perfect?
4 Is it ¹for thy fear *of him* that he reproveth thee,
That he entereth with thee into judgement?
5 Is not thy wickedness great?
Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.
6 For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for nought,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.
8 But as for ²the mighty man, he had the ³earth;
And ⁴the honourable man, he dwelt in it,
9 Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
10 Therefore snares are round about thee,
And sudden fear troubleth thee,
11 ⁵Or darkness, that thou canst not see,
And abundance of waters cover thee.
12 Is not God in the height of heaven?
And behold the ⁶height of the stars, how high they are!
13 And thou sayest, What doth God know?
Can he judge through the thick darkness?
14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not;
And he walketh ⁷in the circuit of heaven.
15 ⁸Wilt thou keep the old way

CHAPTER XXII.

¹ Or, *for*
fear of thee

² Heb. *the*
man of
arm.

³ Or, *land*

⁴ Heb. *he*
whose
person is
accepted.

⁵ Or, *Or*
dost thou
not see the
darkness,
and the
flood of
waters that
covereth
thee?

⁶ Heb.
head.

⁷ Or, *on the*
vault

⁸ Or, *Dost*
thou mark

CHAPTER XXII.	Which wicked men have trodden?	
♦♦♦	Who were snatched away before their time,	16
¹ Or, to	Whose foundation was poured out as a stream :	
² Heb. them.	Who said unto God, Depart from us ;	17
³ Or, that which remained to them Or, their abundance	And, What can the Almighty do ¹ for ² us ?	18
	Yet he filled their houses with good things :	
	But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.	19
	The righteous see it, and are glad ;	
	And the innocent laugh them to scorn :	
⁴ Or, as otherwise read, Thereby shall thine increase be good.	<i>Saying</i> , Surely they that did rise up against us are cut off,	20
	And ³ the remnant of them the fire hath consumed.	
	Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace :	21
	⁴ Thereby good shall come unto thee.	
	Receive, I pray thee, ⁵ the law from his mouth,	22
	And lay up his words in thine heart.	
⁵ Or, instruction	If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up ;	23
⁶ Or, Thou shalt put away . . . and shalt lay up	⁶ If thou put away unrighteousness far from thy tents.	
⁷ Heb. ore.	And lay thou <i>thy</i> ⁷ treasure ⁸ in the dust,	24
	And <i>the gold of Ophir</i> among the stones of the brooks ;	
	And the Almighty shall be thy ⁷ treasure,	25
	And ⁹ precious silver unto thee.	
⁸ Or, on the earth	For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty,	26
⁹ Or, precious silver shall be thine	And shalt lift up thy face unto God.	
	Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee ;	27
¹⁰ Or, are made low	And thou shalt pay thy vows.	
¹¹ Heb. him that is lowly of eyes.	Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee ;	28
¹² Many ancient versions read, him that is innocent.	And light shall shine upon thy ways.	
¹³ Or, bitter	When they ¹⁰ cast <i>thee</i> down, thou shalt say, <i>There is</i> lifting up ;	29
	And ¹¹ the humble person he shall save.	
	He shall deliver ¹² <i>even</i> him that is not innocent :	30
	Yea, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of thine hands.	
	Then Job answered and said,	23
	Even to-day is my complaint ¹³ rebellious :	2
¹⁴ Or, accounted rebellion	¹⁴ My stroke is heavier than my groaning.	
	Oh that I knew where I might find him,	3
	That I might come even to his seat !	
¹⁴ Or, My hand is heavy upon (or because of)	The Sept. and Syr. read, <i>His hand.</i>	

CHAPTER
XXIII.

- 4 I would order my cause before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
- 5 I would know the words which he would answer me,
And understand what he would say unto me.
- 6 Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
Nay; ¹but he would give heed unto me.
- 7 There the upright might reason with him;
So should I be delivered for ever from my judge.
- 8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not *there*;
And backward, but I cannot perceive him:
- 9 On the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold him:
He ²hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.
- 10 ³But he knoweth ⁴the way that I take;
When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
- 11 My foot hath held fast to his steps;
His way have I kept, and turned not aside.
- 12 I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured up the words of his mouth ⁵more than my
⁶necessary food.
- 13 But ⁷he is in one *mind*, and who can turn him?
And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.
- 14 For he performeth that which is appointed for me:
And many such things are with him.
- 15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence;
When I consider, I am afraid of him.
- 16 For God hath made my heart faint,
And the Almighty hath troubled me:
- 17 ⁸Because I was not cut off before the darkness,
Neither did he cover the thick darkness from my face.
- 24 ⁹Why are times not laid up by the Almighty?
And why do not they which know him see his days?
- 2 There are that remove the landmarks;
They violently take away flocks, and feed them.
- 3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless,
They take the widow's ox for a pledge.
- 4 They turn the needy out of the way:
The ¹⁰poor of the earth hide themselves together.

¹ Or, *he would only give heed*

² Or, *turneth himself to . . . him, but*

³ Or, *for*

⁴ Heb. *the way that is with me.*

⁵ Or, *more than my own law*

The Sept.

and Vulgate have, *in my bosom.*

⁶ Or,

portion.
See Prov.

xxx. 8.

⁷ Or, *he is one*

⁸ Or, *For I am not dismayed because of the darkness, nor because thick darkness covereth my face*

⁹ Or, *Why is it, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, that they which know him see not his days?*

¹⁰ Or, *meek*

CHAPTER XXIV.	Behold, as wild asses in the desert	5
→→→	They go forth to their work, seeking diligently for ¹ meat ;	
¹ Heb. <i>prey</i> .	The wilderness <i>yieldeth</i> them food for their children.	
² Or, <i>his</i>	They cut ² their provender in the field ;	6
	And they glean the vintage of the wicked.	
	They lie all night naked without clothing,	7
	And have no covering in the cold.	
	They are wet with the showers of the mountains,	8
	And embrace the rock for want of a shelter.	
	There are that pluck the fatherless from the breast,	9
³ Or, <i>take in pledge that which is on the poor</i>	And ³ take a pledge of the poor :	
	<i>So that</i> they go about naked without clothing,	10
	And being an-hungred they carry the sheaves ;	
	They make oil within the walls of these men ;	11
	They tread <i>their</i> winepresses, and suffer thirst.	
⁴ Heb. <i>city of men</i> .	From out of the ⁴ populous city men groan,	12
	And the soul of the wounded crieth out :	
	Yet God imputeth it not for folly.	
	These are of them that rebel against the light ;	13
	They know not the ways thereof,	
	Nor abide in the paths thereof.	
	The murderer riseth with the light, he killeth the poor and	14
	needy ;	
⁵ Or, <i>putteth a covering on his face</i>	And in the night he is as a thief.	
	The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight,	15
	Saying, No eye shall see me :	
⁶ Or, <i>Which they had marked for themselves</i>	And he ⁵ disguiseth his face.	
	In the dark they dig through houses :	16
	⁶ They shut themselves up in the daytime ;	
	They know not the light.	
⁷ Or, <i>Ye say, He is &c.</i>	For the morning is to all of them as the shadow of death ;	17
	For they know the terrors of the shadow of death.	
⁸ Heb. <i>violently take away</i> .	⁷ He is swift upon the face of the waters ;	18
⁹ Or, <i>the grave</i>	Their portion is cursed in the earth :	
	He turneth not by the way of the vineyards.	
	Drought and heat ⁸ consume the snow waters :	19
	<i>So doth</i> ⁹ Sheol <i>those which</i> have sinned.	

- 20 The womb shall forget him ; the worm shall feed sweetly on him ;
 He shall be no more remembered :
 And unrighteousness shall be broken ¹as a tree.
- 21 He devoureth the barren that beareth not ;
 And doeth not good to the widow.
- 22 ²He draweth away the mighty also by his power :
 He riseth up, and no man is sure of life.
- 23 *God* giveth them to be in security, and they rest thereon ;
³And his eyes are upon their ways.
- 24 They are exalted ; yet a little while, and they are gone ;
⁴Yea, they are brought low, they are ⁵taken out of the way
 as all other,
 And are cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.
- 25 And if it be not so now, who will prove me a liar,
 And make my speech nothing worth ?
- 25 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
 2 Dominion and fear are with him ;
 He maketh peace in his high places.
- 3 Is there any number of his armies ?
 And upon whom doth not his light arise ?
- 4 How then can man be just ⁶with God ?
 Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman ?
- 5 Behold, even the moon hath no brightness,
 And the stars are not pure in his sight :
- 6 How much less man, that is a worm !
 And the son of man, which is a worm !

CHAPTER
XXIV.

¹ Or, *as a tree : even he that devoureth &c.*

² Or, *Yet God by his power maketh the mighty to continue :*

they rise up, when they believed not that they should live

³ Or, *But*

⁴ Or, *And when they are &c.*

⁵ Or, *gathered in*

⁶ Or, *before*

LECTURE VIII.

CHAPTERS XXII-XXV.

THOSE of you who joined in our earlier studies of the book which we now once more open, will remember that we left Job, at the close of Chapter xxi, in an hour of gloom, we may almost say of despair. His friends had brought him no comfort. Each in turn had addressed him twice; and each in turn had added gall to the bitterness of his cup. Again and again they had enforced upon him what seemed to them to be the cardinal and central truth on which all religion rested—that the course of this world is so ordered by an all-powerful and righteous God, that each man receives here below the measure of success or failure, of happiness or misery, which is justly due to him. And if so, the conclusion was clear. The appalling blows which had fallen upon their friend, which had left him childless, beggared, and prostrate under a disease so widely associated with God's direct visitation, could have only one meaning. These things must have answered, they felt and could not but feel, to something in Job's life which called for and justified them. So the only course open to them, was, it might well seem, that which they followed. Gently and indirectly at first, more sternly and more clearly afterwards, they call upon him to recognise the justice of the God whom he and they alike worship; to put away whatever evil has marked his life, and turn

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Chap. xxii.

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Chap. xxii.

to One who will surely pardon and accept his erring but repenting servant. And as they reason thus with their friend, the gulf between him and them widens at every word. And it is no wonder that it should be so. His soul is becoming, as it were, a stage on which strange and dreadful phantoms flit to and fro. Sorrow, which came to him at first with such sweet and chastening influences, has introduced him to a world of new and terrible ideas. Undreamed of problems wring his heart and perplex his brain, and drive him to the very verge of madness and despair.

But these torturing questions do not disturb his friends at all. The world is to them a good and well-ordered world; or indeed, to borrow a phrase famous once, not yet forgotten, 'the best of all possible worlds.' They do not see why they should give up one of the main articles of their ancestral creed, because their poor afflicted and sick friend breaks down under his own personal trials, and chooses to launch wild and unmeasured words against the Providence of God, and the government of the universe. They came to him full of sympathy, and desirous to show their sympathy. His first loud and bitter cry of pain startled them. It was not what they had expected from one who, in happier days, had *instructed many, strengthened the weak hands and the feeble knees*¹. But they had tried to bring him back to his own true and better self, by gentle hints of the infirmity and imperfection inherent in humanity; and by a touching and sympathetic call to welcome God's chastening rod², and to look to Him for a return to even

¹ Ch. iv. 3, 4.² See especially iv. 12-21, v. 17-26, and xi. 13-19.

greater happiness than that which had so suddenly, and by a sentence so unmistakeably judicial and providential, been snatched away. But such advice had been quite useless. Job had turned on his friends with reproaches, and on his God with still wilder cries of agony and bewilderment. Like them, he can dwell on the power, the omnipotence, the omniscience of God; but every word which his advisers say to him on this head, and every corresponding word with which he joins them in emphasising this article of their common creed, widens the breach between him and them. What to him, to his spiritual nature, is the stay or comfort of knowing that God is omnipotent, if He shews His power by arbitrarily torturing His true servant, by chasing him hither and thither *as a driven leaf*? Have there been none since Job's day whom this representation of God, simply as a Being of unlimited power and arbitrary will, has kept aloof from the God of all mercies and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

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And his friends, irritated and embarrassed by his words, can merely repeat, each in his turn, the long drawn out assertion of God's unerring justice. Each paints his vivid pictures of the calamities that fall upon evil doers, till the sense of the wrong which they are doing by implicitly or explicitly classing him with such, gathers a darker shape in the mind of Job, and transfers itself from them to God. He knows and feels that he is not a malefactor; not a sinner, in the sense in which they use the word; that he has served his God simply, sincerely, and devoutly. We must not look in the heart of this Arabian Patriarch for that subtler and deeper sense of inward sinfulness and unworthiness, which rises like a ceaseless spring in

LECTURE the hearts of those who have once come within the teaching
 VIII. of Christ and the influence of his Spirit. Nor is this the
 Chap. xxii. question which is at stake. The issue between himself
 and his friends is something quite different. They dwell,
 often in very beautiful language, on the imperfection of all
 created things, even of Angels, before God, and on the general
 sinfulness of man. But it is not *this* which they would
 have Job acknowledge. Nor is it any consequence of,
 or any judgment on, 'original sin,' if I may use a phrase
 unknown to them, that they see in his terrible calamities.
 God, they tell him, reserves his chastisement for *the wicked*,
 for the secret or the open offender; and by degrees they
 enclose Job within a narrowing circle of darker and darker
 pictures of suffering like, or analogous to, his own; and
 they underwrite them all with the expressive words:

*This is the portion of a wicked man from God,
 And the heritage appointed unto him by God¹.*

And Job knows well their meaning. God, he is told,
 has declared against him, and his own heart echoes the
 dread announcement. Let me recall to you language which
 he has already used:

*He hath made me weary:
 Thou hast made desolate all my company.
 And thou hast laid fast hold on me, which is a witness
 against me:
 And my leanness riseth up against me, it testifieth to my face.
 He hath torn me in his wrath and persecuted me;
 He hath gnashed upon me with his teeth:
 Mine adversary sharpeneth his eyes upon me.
 They have gaped upon me with their mouth;*

¹ Ch. xx. 29.

They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully :

They gather themselves together against me.

God delivereth me to the ungodly,

And casteth me into the hands of the wicked¹.

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But if so, what then? It is not his friends only who are unjust. There is injustice elsewhere. The solid earth seems to pass from beneath his feet. He feels himself wronged, wronged not merely by his friends, but by his God. Earnestly, therefore, and passionately he cries to God to clear his doubt, to listen to his pleading, to send him some word of light and guidance. And as no answer comes, we have heard him pass outside the limits of his own individual sufferings, and question and deny the existence of any rule of justice in the world; and in the last chapter which we read we had a long and elaborate picture of what seem to him the dismal inequalities and heart-rending injustices of life.

There is no room for doubt as to the point on which the controversy is now turning. 'The world,' say the friends, 'is a well-ruled world. Everywhere in the experience of life are to be seen, not the traces merely, but the clear proofs of an undeviatingly just administration. Everywhere well-being is the reward of goodness, suffering the penalty of moral evil.' 'The world,' says Job, 'is an ill-ruled world. Heavy calamities may fall, do fall, upon the innocent. Great prosperity may be, often is, the lot of the wicked.' The combatants have joined issue on the most vital of all questions.

You see how far we have left behind us those serene heights, where Job, bereft of all that gave life its value,

¹ Ch. xvi. 7-11.

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Chap. xxii.

bowed meekly and gently before the stroke, and blessed Him that smote him. Yes! He has travelled far since then! By what storms have we seen him tossed! What volcanic outbursts have sent their scorching blasts, their blinding showers across his path! Where is the man of patience now? What one word has he spoken, since his first sad outcry, that breathes the faintest trace of his earlier calm? Storm and tempest, and agony and passion and self-assertion—of these his utterances have been full. Dismal pictures of human life; dark and dismal pictures of death; eager and impatient appeals to God to withdraw his heavy hand, and vindicate his justice; cries, groans, shrieks we might almost say, of rebellion and revolt, loud protestations of his innocence—these have met us at every step. It is a sublime impatience, and stirs our souls as we read it; but it *is* impatience. It is a sublime despair; but it *is*, or it verges on, despair.

For he cannot, remember, this Prometheus of the Old Testament, speak, act, or feel as did the Prometheus of the Greek. He cannot, as the vulture tears his vitals, gather himself to his full height, and hurl his proud, half-smiling defiance at a hostile God. He cannot, like a Hamlet, take refuge in moody and half cynical musings; or meekly accept

‘The heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world.’

His pain lies deeper; for the God, Whose dealings with him and with the world seem so baffling and so mysterious, is still the one God, Whose spirit fills heaven and earth; Who has no rival claimant to the Lordship of the Universe; and He is a God to Whom Job’s whole spirit turns with a yearning and a passion which intensify his bewilderment and darken his despair. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is*

*none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee*¹, is still the feeling that lies deep down in the centre of his being.

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And there we left him, when last we listened to his pathetic accents.

Chap. xxii.

Far behind us, let me say again, lies the Job of popular, of ecclesiastical, of artistic tradition. That stately figure, majestic even when prostrate in its utter misery, has passed into the heart and brain, I might almost say, of our race, as the highest type of a noble and saintly resignation. Now it is marred with other and deeper lines than those which mere sorrow draws. And we too, like his friends, may look on that familiar face, 'and know him not;' and we too, in a far deeper sense than they, may 'see that his grief is very great².'

What were his last words? They were such, that before he uttered them, he bade his friends *lay each his hand on his mouth*³ in awe-struck silence; and trouble seized on his own soul, and his very flesh crept as the thoughts to which he gave expression forced their way into his spirit. And so shuddering, he spoke. And he drew a picture, not with a word or a touch as before, but one worked out in full detail, of a misruled world. And he placed it before his God, and before those who, in the name as they felt of outraged religion and insulted piety, had undertaken to plead the cause of God.

Chap. xxi.
ver. 5, 6.

And now, each having already spoken twice, the eldest and the most thoughtful of the three rises for the last time to rebuke and win back, if he may, his erring friend.

His words are calm and well-weighed. In the form in which they are now accessible to the English reader, this

¹ Psalm lxxiii. 25.

² Chap. ii. 12, 13.

³ Ch. xxi. 5, 6.

LECTURE final discourse of the most dignified of Job's reprovers,
 VIII. deserves, and will reward, our attentive study. It lies before
 —♦— us here in Chapter xxii. You will notice at once that
 Chap. xxii. the speaker does not attempt to grapple with the problem
 which Job has placed before him—his graphic and terrible
 picture of the 'fundamental hold which injustice and dis-
 order have over this visible order of things.' I am translating,
 you see, Job's fervid poetry into the plain prose of our own
 age, and quoting the very words of one of its most thoughtful
 writers¹. But this picture which Job puts forward as a faith-
 ful copy of human life does not seem to produce any effect at
 all upon Eliphaz. How or why this is so, it is not for us to
 say. It is enough that Job's troubles and pains had carried
 him, and were designed to carry him, into a region as far
 from the circle of thought in which his friends' religious life
 revolved, as was the land of Uz from the city of David. He
 sees sights and shapes which they cannot see; he hears
 voices which they cannot hear.

Let us listen at once to the words of Eliphaz. He begins
 with what amounts to a blank denial of the existence of any
 ground for Job's perplexity, or Job's bewilderment. 'Speak
 ver. 2, 3. not,' he says, 'presumptuous Job, as though thy fancied
 innocence were some gain to God; something that has made
 Him thy debtor. It is to himself, not to God, that the wise
 ver. 4. man's goodness is profitable. HE hath no rule but that
 of high impartial justice. Dream not that He would have
 thus rebuked and afflicted thee for thy piety; a monstrous
 thought!' And then he meets all Job's difficulties, by an
 answer, which, if true, would dispose of them at once and
 finally; and which he now brings forward in the form of

¹ The late Professor Mozley in his *Essay on the Book of Job*.

a well-weighed and careful indictment against his friend's former career. Untrue and unfeeling as his language seems to us, it was to him, and to those who stood by him—representing, remember, the current religious thought of their time—the natural key to all that had come to pass. He entrenches himself behind the facts that he sees—Job's heaven-sent calamities; and he presses home, in this his last utterance, the principle which he upholds, to its full and rigorous conclusion. 'Great,' he says, 'are thy sufferings; great, therefore, must have been thy misdeeds:'

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Is not thy wickedness great?

ver. 5.

Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.

And then he charges him with a significant list of such offences as would naturally be put in the forefront by a Hebrew writer, the groundwork of whose language is based on the experience of Hebrew life, but whose scenery and diction are drawn from and adapted to a patriarchal age.

'Job,' he says, 'has played the part of the hard usurer; for a mere nothing he has taken a security, the forfeiture of which has left a brother naked. He has let the thirsty perish for lack of a cup of water. He has denied the hungry a morsel of bread. The land,' says Eliphaz, 'and all its fruits, Job has looked on as a mere chattel of the powerful and the respected, of him *whose person is accepted*, i. e. of himself and men like himself. The rights of property have been everything to him, its duties nothing. What to him,' he goes on, 'the widow's cry, the cry for help, or the cry for justice? What against his wealth has availed the orphan's slender store?'

ver. 6.

ver. 7.

ver. 8
(Margin).

ver. 9.

It is a very terrible indictment; yet it is one couched in terms familiar to all readers of the Old Testament, or of the New; and it is one which Job will not, as we shall see, allow

- LECTURE VIII.
 Chap. xxii. to pass unchallenged. But it goes, as you see, to borrow a phrase old as this ancient book, to 'the root of the matter.' If Eliphaz is right, we may close the book; for it is so far, merely the history of the just punishment of a Pharisee, 'who had devoured widows' houses,' had offered a tainted sacrifice, and played false with God and man. It is the history of no Saint, but of a long undetected, and now convicted malefactor. And having at last said this, the speaker naturally presses home the lesson of his words. 'Thy sins,' he says in verse 10, 'have found thee out. These *snares* (a common figure for sudden heaven-sent pains), these spiritual terrors, this black darkness, these deep waters'—how familiar the images!—
- ver. 11. 'these floods that roll over thee, seest thou not in them thy just retribution?' And then—we can imagine that we hear the voice of some spiritual adviser or 'director' of centuries later—he tries to read to Job the secret of his inner life; the history of the frame of mind which had brought him to his doom. 'Far above the starry heavens,' he reminds him, 'is the dwelling-
- ver. 12. place of God; *Behold the height of the stars, how high they are.* But this thought, instead of solemnising thy soul, and deepening thy piety, led thee to question His rule on earth.
- ver. 13. Distance, thou thoughtest, and the clouds of earth would hide
- ver. 14. thee from the eye of Him *who walketh on the vault of heaven.* And in thy deeds,' he goes on, 'then, as in thy language now,
- ver. 15. thou wast not alone; nay, thou followedst—is it not so?—the old broad way of wickedness that so many had trodden before thy time.' It is conceivable, but far from clear, that the reference is to the bad men of the evil days before the Flood.
- ver. 16. 'They too were cut down,' he says, 'by God's just stroke before their day; the solid foundation of their prosperity was swept away—even as thine,' he seems to say—'as by a rushing flood.

And they too, had said avaunt! to God—to them too, a far off God had seemed an ineffectual force. And yet, he cries—it is his friend doubtless, who is in his eye—‘*He had filled their houses with good.*’ And as he speaks, he utters, as though in stern rebuke, the same indignant words which had passed once from Job’s lips, as *he* drew *his* picture of triumphant and unpunished wickedness¹.

‘Yes! like thee, I say, *far from me be the counsel*, the thought, *of the wicked*; only, unlike thee, I add that their doom is sure—that *the righteous see* their fall and *are glad*; and *the innocent laugh* them to scorn; for they see the enemies of God’s cause cut down, and his fire consuming their utmost remnant.’

It is a sentiment common, as we know, to Psalm after Psalm. It has too often forced its way through all the teaching of Jesus to the hearts and lips of the disciples of Jesus, and Christians have exulted over what have seemed the judgments of God falling on fellow-Christians, in whom they have seen the enemies of God and of His Church².

And having so far, in the first twenty verses, discharged his duty, and tried, as he no doubt believed, to reach and quicken

¹ Ch. xxi. 16.

² It is instructive to note the words of Gregory on the passage (Book XVI. xiii.), ‘The righteous, when they see the unrighteous erring here, cannot be glad for the errors of persons ruining themselves. For if they rejoice in erring they cease to be righteous.’ Again, ‘If in the feeling of triumph they are glad for this, that they are not such as they see others are, they are altogether full of pride.’ . . . Again, ‘if we say that the righteous can triumph with a perfect joy over the death of the wicked, what sort of thing is joy for vengeance on sinners in this world, wherein the life of the righteous is still uncertain?’ Gregory, however, meets the difficulty, not by marking the difference between ‘them of old time’ and Christ’s disciples, but by postponing the feeling of exultation on the part of the righteous to the ‘Final Inquest,’ the Day of Judgment.

LECTURE the slumbering conscience of his friend, he pleads with him
 VIII. in very gentle and even affectionate language to make his
 Chap. xxii. peace with God.

ver. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with Him, make Him thy friend, and be at peace :*

Thereby good shall come unto thee.

A singularly beautiful and suggestive couplet, is it not? We think of that knowledge of God, for which an Apostle sighed. 'Then shall I know even as also I am known;' or of the blessing promised to the pure in heart that 'they shall see God.'

ver. 22. And then, begging him to receive and lay to heart, what is, he feels sure, teaching that comes from God Himself through human lips, the good man—good, I must needs call him, however blinded and mistaken—proceeds to pour forth words of exhortation and advice, as admirable in themselves as they are ill-timed and misplaced. Is he the last well-intentioned teacher or adviser, who has poured vinegar instead of oil into the wounds of the troubled heart, or of the restless intellect?

ver. 23. *Put, he says to the poor guiltless leper on his dung heap,*

ver. 24. *iniquity far from thy tents : Lay thy treasured gold-ore in the dust. Thine Ophir—you will let me remind you that the use of the word for gold points to an age in which language had already received the impress of the age of Solomon¹—*

ver. 24, 25. *Lay thine Ophir among the mere pebbles of the brook.*

'Set not thy heart on riches,' he says to the soul struggling with darker trials than the loss of all the mines of the Old World or the New:

ver. 25-27. *Then the Almighty shall be thy treasure,
 And precious silver shall He be unto thee.*

¹ See above, p. 171.

Thou shalt delight in Him, and lift thy face, with frank and loving confidence, unto God;

LECTURE
VIII.

‘Thou shalt make thy prayers to Him and be heard, and have good reason to pay thy vows. Whatever thou proposest He will bring to pass, and light once more shall shine upon thy path. Yea! when others are cast down, thy cheering words shall refresh and encourage the despondent. Thou shalt comfort the “poor in spirit;” yea so dear shalt thou be to God, that for thy sake, for *the cleanness of thy hands*, he will spare and forgive thy less innocent neighbour.’ The closing words, though somewhat obscure in the original, and meaningless in our Authorised Version, remind us of the words of a wiser Teacher. ‘I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not, and thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren¹.’

Chap. xxii.

ver. 28.

ver. 29.

ver. 30.

It is surely a most attractive picture of a promised nearness of man to God.

I have gone through the words of Eliphaz with unusual care, both for their own sake and because they sum up, and seem to be intended to do so, the whole position which the friends have finally taken up, its strength and its weakness.

They seem quite sincere, quite heart-whole, so to speak. They cannot help believing, that if God, whom they worship with entire and absolute reverence, is a just God, Job must needs have deserved his sufferings.

The riddle of the world, let me remind you once more, has never entered into their souls; and therefore all Job’s complaints, and cries, and questionings, are in their eyes mere profanity. They are signs in fact, when taken with his sufferings, that there is something radically wrong in his

¹ Luke xxii. 32. (Revised Version.)

LECTURE VIII. whole past life, and in his present spiritual state. The scenes to which he points them, of successful wickedness, Chap. xxii. they do not care to look at, or to trouble themselves with. The world seems to them to be ruled not merely 'in the long run,' but in each generation, in each human life, 'in accordance with veracity and justice;' and all doubts on such a subject are criminal in the highest degree; are the natural outcome of a tainted life. They have no choice, therefore, but to do what they do; to come forward with reflections, suggestions, advice, warnings, admirable of their kind, often exceedingly beautiful and touching, only quite misapplied. They are like physicians with excellent remedies, but no power of reading symptoms; no gift for *diagnosis*, as we should say. Poor Job lies before them with the lamp of life dim and half extinguished; his spiritual vitality is 'fluttering, faint, and low.' They treat him as one suffering from a wholly opposite form of malady; from a redundancy, so to speak, of feverish vitality, that finds an outlet in wanton violence, and rank rebellion. They were not the first, perhaps, certainly not the last, to make the same mistake.

And now we turn once more to him at whom these shafts have been levelled. Job has listened to the third and last address of the eldest and soberest of his friends. What is its Chap. xxiii. effect on him? He answers in the opening verses of Chapter ver. 1. xxiii. as though he had heard it not. After one single indignant ejaculation, which, as it is the despair of translators and commentators, I shall pass over, he turns from his friends to the God who dwells in the thick darkness, far above the misrule and disorder of this lower world; far also, alas! from the reach of his troubled servant.

ver. 3.

Oh that I knew where I might find him,

That I might come even to his seat of judgment.

LECTURE
VIII.

Once more he is sure that God, could he but gain a hearing, would listen to him, and answer him, not merely overwhelm him with His power. Strong in his conscience, strong in the sense of innocence, he feels that his Great Judge would give him a patient hearing and a final acquittal. But alas! 'where is this awful yet righteous Being to be found? Eastward I turn, but He is not there; Westward, but I cannot perceive Him; in the North I may see His works, but Himself I find not; Southward I turn, and there He hides Himself.' 'Yes,' he cries in the bitterness of his anguish, 'He hides Himself, that He may not have to acknowledge my innocence, and to withdraw His heavy hand.' *For innocent I am*, he cries aloud once more with redoubled vehemence,

Chap. xxiii.

ver. 4-6.

ver. 7.

ver. 8, 9.

Let him try me and I should come forth like gold.

ver. 10-12.

'For I have walked in His steps, followed His commandments, treasured them, as my very daily food. But it is all in vain! Can the potsherd strive with the potter? He has doomed me by an inflexible decree.'

He is in one mind, and who can turn him?

ver. 13, 14.

And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

Job, you see, is down in depths to which many souls, gifted souls, of men for whom Christ died, have sunk since his day. *Many such things are with Him*, he adds; 'my lot, i. e. is but a sample of the irresistible law of God's sovereign will, to which human innocence and guilt are nothing.' 'And this,' he says, as well he may, 'is a still darker thought, than even the darkness that has covered my own face;'

ver. 14.

ver. 15, 16.

ver. 17.

R. V.
margin.

Yea! God hath made my heart faint,

And the Almighty hath troubled me.

LECTURE
VIII.

Chap. xxiii.

You see into what a further stage of despair and misery he has passed. 'God has foredoomed me to these sufferings. By His sovereign will He has predestined me to perdition. He will not let me plead with Him; will not listen to me; hides Himself from me.' And from this gloomy and dark conviction, which has ere now fixed itself so firmly in the human soul as to dethrone reason from her seat, he turns, by a natural transition, to another aspect of an ill-governed world. The God who leaves Job to his torments, leaves the wide world to violence and wrong.

The panorama of life that he once more unrolls before us in Chapter xxiv. is exceedingly vivid and realistic. You and I can hardly accept the view that it is an allegorical picture of the mischief wrought on God's faithful people by heretical teachers. Yet we ask in vain, from what special age, or from what race or land in a world long passed away, it is drawn. To our own generation almost every detail, thanks to the efforts of laborious workers in the field, not of Hebrew only, but of other kindred languages, stands out with a sharpness and clearness for which our fathers would have looked in vain. It forms a dark and sombre picture of the condition of the labouring classes, the 'toiling masses,' to use a too familiar expression, of some unknown date long before the Christian era.

Chap. xxiv.
ver. 1.

'Why is it,' he asks in Chapter xxiv, 'that *times* and periods for just retribution *are not laid up* and observed by the All-powerful? Why is it that those who recognise his power *see not his days?*' You know how often the word *Day* is used in this sense in the Bible—for God's own time of meting out doom and retribution. 'Look out,' he goes on, 'on the spectacle of life; do you see the clock-work

regularity of goodness and reward, evil and penalty, of which my friends and comforters speak so glibly? Alas! the whole "world is out of joint." It is a mere selfish struggle; the weaker always overpowered; the strongest always surviving. Here you see the rich landowner removing his neighbour's landmark, curtailing by fraud, in a hedgeless unfenced land, the narrow possessions of his poorer countrymen.' *Cursed, you remember the solemn words¹, cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen!* But Job sees no curse fall! 'And another,' he tells us, 'takes by force his neighbour's flock, and feeds it as his own, and with his own. And mean avarice has neither shame nor pity. The one ass of the orphan is driven away, the widow's one remaining ox is led off as security (or as forfeited) for some petty loan. And deeper and deeper sink into the mire of misery the "poor of the earth," *the needy and he that hath no helper.* They are driven off from the haunts of men, and slink away to hide themselves out of the oppressor's sight.' He sees them chased from settled homes, to lead the lives of homeless outcasts, or the merely animal and precarious existence of the wild asses of the desert. 'At the first dawn,' he tells us, 'they must rise to the weary task of searching the wild steppe for food for their little ones, finding here and there some scanty sustenance on the face of the untilled earth; and picking here and there (or contemptuously employed to gather in) the last remaining grapes that hang on the rich man's vine. And as the winter draws on, the cold pierces them; the chill soaking shower, creeping down the mountain side, drives them to crouch close to the hard rock for a miserable shelter.' Read, my friends, the

LECTURE
VIII.

Chap. xxiv.

ver. 2.

ver. 3.

ver. 4.

ver. 5.

ver. 6.

ver. 7, 8.

¹ Deut. xxvii. 17.

LECTURE touches, so life-like, so full of feeling, as they follow each other under this sad artist's hand. 'Yes,' he says, 'there are

VIII.

Chap. xxiv.

ver. 9.

those who will take, not the ox only, but the very babe from the mother's breast; and the dead man's child will be brought up in bondage.' And there follows a series of panels, on which are burnt in scenes from the life of slaves, as it would seem, or if not technically slaves, yet of a labouring rural population, reduced to a state of slavish bondage

ver. 10, 11.

which seems quite alien to Arab life. Here, naked and hungry, we see them carrying home the bounteous sheaves; there, with lips parched with thirst, pressing within lofty walls the rich kindly olive; there again, athirst and faint, treading the bounteous grape.

ver. 10.

Being an-hungred they carry the sheaves;

ver. 11.

They make oil within the walls of these men;

They tread their winepresses and suffer thirst.

Is he who speaks to us aware of the words, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn?* He makes no sign of quoting them.

ver. 12.

And then suddenly he turns his gaze on city life—cities of what land, we ask in vain. '*From cities too,*' he says, '*from the populous city,* goes up a groan, and the death-cry of *the wounded* mounts up to Heaven. Yet God, the just God, for whose presence I search in vain—the just God Who rules, you tell me, the world so righteously—yet *God*

ver. 12.

regardeth it not, imputeth it not to folly, enters it not in his book as crime.' The momentary cry bursts from his laden heart. But his eye is fixed again on the confused and disordered scene before him in some Eastern city. With the

ver. 14.

early dawn, he sees misrule and crime. 'Violence and

ver. 15.

murder are abroad. Sins of impurity and lust creep under

shelter of the evening twilight. Through the darkness of the night, the stealthy plunderer plies his guilty task, digs—that Eastern burglar—digs after his manner through the wall of hardened earth. *Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal*; these are the commandments of Him Who said, *Let there be light*. But what are His laws, what is He, to men who hate the light; who are familiar with darkness, with moral darkness as with all darkness?’

They know not the light.

For the morning, the light of dawn, is to all of them as the shadow of death.

The chapter, and the whole speech of Job, is so far, and as we now read it, abundantly clear. But it ends with a passage, the precise force and bearing of which are confessedly difficult to decipher. I will not pause for a moment to discuss the various theories of misplaced verses, erroneous readings, manuscripts in disorder, which have in turn occurred to commentators.

‘It may be quite true,’ he seems to say, musing to himself over human life, ‘quite true as you tell me, that the triumph of wickedness does not last for ever. Short, I know it as well as you, is often the success of the human beast of prey. Swift as a light feather, he is swept along by the river of oblivion. If the spot on which he dwelt recalls him, it is only with a curse. He treads no more the path that leads to the vine-clad slope. As snow melts and disappears before the summer heat, so he sinks into the dark underworld. The very mother that bare him, forgets him; the worms hold on him their ghastly banquet; and none remember him. Yea, as a tree snapped short in its prime, lies he who had no pity on her whom no sons protected; had

LECTURE
VIII.

Chap. xxiv.
ver. 16.

ver.
13, 16, 17.

ver. 18-25.

ver. 18.

ver. 19.

ver. 20.

LECTURE no word or act of kindness for her whom no husband shielded.
 VIII. Yes! this may be so,' he seems to say. 'I can draw this
 Chap. xxiv. picture as well as you. You may represent the death that,
 ver. 21. "come he soon, or come he fast," comes to all, as the
 punishment of their sin. But what do we see for all that?
 What is the evidence of experience?'

'God does' (I follow here the line of interpretation
 adopted, under the authority of the most sagacious of com-
 mentators, in the margin of the Revised Version), 'God
 ver. 22. does often uplift and sustain the great oppressor. He rises
 again, even when he despaired of life. God gives such men
 ver. 23. rest and security: His eyes are on their ways, they walk
 under, as it seems, His protection. True, they share the
 common lot. When life's brief span is over, and the harvest-
 time of death comes, they are cut off as the ripe ears of corn.
 ver. 24. *They are taken out of the way as all other.* They pass away,
 for they are men, and as men born to the doom of death.'
 'But does this,' he seems to say, 'solve the riddle of life? And
 yet is not this picture also true? If it is false, who will
 ver. 25. prove me in the wrong? *Who will make me a liar, and make
 my speech nothing worth?*'

I need not comment on Job's words. He has once more
 cried to God to hear his cause and solve his doubts. He
 has once more protested his innocence of any conscious
 offence that could have drawn down His anger; and once
 more, with an almost passionless calm, he has followed out,
 to their terrible result, the suggestions of his friends, and the
 promptings of his own bewildered brain. If God's justice is
 to be measured, as his friends tell him, by the measure of
 happiness or of misery dealt out to every man on this
 earthly scene, then it is an evil world, and Job has a weight

on his soul, heavier than any burden which his own pain or misery can lay upon him. For the world is a scene of suffering, oppression, violence, and wrong; and the conclusion to which this points is very terrible. You see at once its full force; you see how he lays his hand, this Saint of the Old Testament, on the world-old problem of the existence of evil. And I will not linger over the very interesting, but it seems insoluble question, whence the author of the book drew those life pictures by the aid of which he drives home this problem. He must have been familiar, as we see, with phases of experience that lay beyond the circle of Arab life. The crowded city, the very factory, we might almost say, the redundant supply of labour, the hard usurer, the oppressed and toiling masses—these are pictures, which can hardly have fallen on his mental retina, from a mere effort of the imagination. Had he been a dweller among the crowded cities of Egypt, or those that lined the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates? Had he been a sojourner under Arab tents, and a dweller also in the cities of Northern or Southern Palestine? From what age, from what scene, we ask once more, and ask in vain, comes this mysterious figure of the Arab patriarch, rich in pastoral wealth, yet familiar with the thoughts and customs, the sins and woes, of the multitudes who dwell within the walls of cities; who speaks at one time as a desert sage, at another as a very tribune of the oppressed masses? We ask, and ask in vain.

Yet the question recurs with increasing interest as we listen to his words, words that are the expression of no extinct or obsolete range of ideas, but of feelings that are as strong and living to-day, in and outside the crowded capitals of Europe, as they were when they first found

LECTURE
VIII.

—♦♦—
Chap. xxiv.

LECTURE VIII. utterance. What a fresh force they lend to the words of Him to whom the poor man's cause was dear. 'The poor ye have *always* with you.'

Chap. xxiv.

Yet how strange this unlooked for and sympathetic description of the suffering, of the despised, the unbefriended, the downtrodden, breaking out suddenly from the desolate and bewildered heart of him who bore but lately the name of the 'greatest of the sons of the East.' It has no parallel, we may fairly say, in the whole of ancient literature outside the Bible.

And there, we might almost say, ends the controversy. Job has yet much to say, but his friends have reached the limit of their arguments. They see too well that their words make no impression on him to whom they are addressed. Accordingly, supposing the book to have reached us in its original form, with its order and arrangement unaltered, the second friend, Bildad, will now come forward for a moment, utter a few words, and leave Job in possession of the field. Of the third, of Zophar, so eager and impetuous when the dispute began, we shall hear no more.

Chap. xxv. There is little new in Bildad's short and parting address. He attempts no answer to Job's questioning, or Job's denial—for his words almost amount to this—of the justice with which the world is administered. Nor does he take up again the weapon which Eliphaz had handled, of charging Job with special guilt. He simply entrenches himself behind the greatness and majesty of God. 'God is so powerful,' he says, 'and so awful, rules with such entire control over the heights of Heaven and the battalions of angels and of stars'—you will notice how often the starry host is identified with the angelic armies—that there is no rebellion dreamed of there. It is vain

ver. 2, 3.

then for man, a mere pismire down here in the dust, a worm and the child of worms, to talk of innocence and right and wrong before Him. His light pervades all creation; the moon and stars are dim, their rays impure, before Him; what room is there for man that is born of woman to question His righteousness?' LECTURE
VIII.
—♦—
Chap. xxv.
ver. 4-6.

How then can man be just with God?

Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

It is the last word which either of the three friends will utter. They have played each in turn their part. We shall listen in due course to Job's final response to them, and to his final appeal to Him for whom they believe themselves to be pleading. One and another fresh phase and aspect of this ancient record of the travail of the human soul will pass before us. Job will pour forth his soul through six chapters, in a monologue that will travel through a range of varied and almost conflicting thoughts. But from his three friends we shall hear no more.

February 13, 1886.

LECTURE IX.

CHAPTERS XXVI—XXVIII.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. XXVI—XXVIII.)

- 26 Then Job answered and said,
 2 How hast thou helped him that is without power !
 How hast thou saved the arm that hath no strength !
 3 How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom,
 And plentifully declared sound knowledge !
 4 To whom hast thou uttered words ?
 And whose ¹spirit came forth from thee ?
 5 ²They that are deceased tremble
 Beneath the waters and the inhabitants thereof.
 6 ³Sheol is naked before him,
 And ⁴Abaddon hath no covering.
 7 He stretcheth out the north over empty space,
 And hangeth the earth ⁵upon nothing.
 8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds ;
 And the cloud is not rent under them.
 9 He closeth in the face of his throne,
 And spreadeth his cloud upon it.
 10 He hath described a boundary upon the face of the waters,
 Unto the confines of light and darkness.
 11 The pillars of heaven tremble
 And are astonished at his rebuke.
 12 He ⁶stirreth up the sea with his power,
 And by his understanding he smiteth through ⁷Rahab.
 13 By his spirit the heavens are ⁸garnished ;
 His hand hath pierced the ⁹swift serpent.
 14 Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways :
 And ¹⁰how small a whisper ¹¹do we hear of him !
 But the thunder of his ¹²power who can understand ?

CHAPTER XXVI.

- ¹ Heb. *breath.*
² Or, *The shades*
 Heb. *The Rephaim.*
³ Or, *The grave*
⁴ Or, *Destruction*
⁵ Or, *over*
⁶ Or, *stilleth*
⁷ See ch. ix. 13.
⁸ Heb. *beauty.*
⁹ Or, *fleeing*
 Or, *gliding*
¹⁰ Or, *how little a portion*
¹¹ Or, *is heard*
¹² Or, *mighty deeds*

CHAPTER	And Job again took up his parable, and said,	27
XXVII.	As God liveth, who hath taken away my right;	2
—♦—	And the Almighty, who hath ¹ vexed my soul;	
¹ Heb.	² (For my life is yet whole in me,	3
<i>made my soul better.</i>	And the spirit of God is in my nostrils;)	
² Or, <i>All the while my breath is in me . . .</i>	Surely my lips ³ shall not speak unrighteousness,	4
<i>nostrils; surely</i>	Neither ⁴ shall my tongue utter deceit.	
³ Or, <i>do</i>	God forbid that I should justify you :	5
⁴ Or, <i>doth</i>	Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.	
⁵ Or, <i>doth not re- proach me for any of my days</i>	My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go :	6
⁶ Or, <i>when God cutteth him off, when he taketh &c.</i>	My heart ⁵ shall not reproach <i>me</i> so long as I live.	
	Let mine enemy be as the wicked,	7
	And let him that riseth up against me be as the unrighteous.	
	For what is the hope of the godless, ⁶ though he get him	8
	gain,	
	When God taketh away his soul?	
	Will God hear his cry,	9
	When trouble cometh upon him?	
	Will he delight himself in the Almighty,	10
	And call upon God at all times?	
	I will teach you concerning the hand of God;	11
	That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.	
	Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it;	12
	Why then are ye become altogether vain?	
	This is the portion of a wicked man with God,	13
	And the heritage of oppressors, which they receive from the Almighty.	
	If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword;	14
	And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.	
	Those that remain of him shall be buried in death,	15
	And his widows shall make no lamentation.	
	Though he heap up silver as the dust,	16
	And prepare raiment as the clay;	
⁷ Some ancient versions have, <i>spider.</i>	He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on,	17
	And the innocent shall divide the silver.	
	He buildeth his house as the ⁷ moth,	18
	And as a booth which the keeper maketh.	

CHAPTER
XXVII.

—♦—
¹ Some ancient versions have, *shall do so no more.*

² Or, *For*

³ Or, *dust*

⁴ Or, *The flood breaketh out from where men sojourn; even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are minished, they are gone away from man*

⁵ Or, *flit*

⁶ Or, *And he winneth lumps of gold*

⁷ Heb. *sons of pride.*

⁸ Or, *passages*

⁹ Heb. *from weeping.*

- 19 He lieth down rich, but he ¹shall not be gathered;
He openeth his eyes, and he is not.
- 20 Terrors overtake him like waters;
A tempest stealeth him away in the night.
- 21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth;
And it sweepeth him out of his place.
- 22 For *God* shall hurl at him, and not spare:
He would fain flee out of his hand.
- 23 Men shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.
- 28 ²Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place for gold which they refine.
- 2 Iron is taken out of the ³earth,
And brass is molten out of the stone.
- 3 *Man* setteth an end to darkness,
And searcheth out to the furthest bound
The stones of thick darkness and of the shadow of death.
- 4 ⁴He breaketh open a shaft away from where men sojourn;
They are forgotten of the foot *that passeth by*;
They hang afar from men, they ⁵swing to and fro.
- 5 As for the earth, out of it cometh bread:
And underneath it is turned up as it were by fire.
- 6 The stones thereof are the place of sapphires,
⁶And it hath dust of gold.
- 7 That path no bird of prey knoweth,
Neither hath the falcon's eye seen it:
- 8 The ⁷proud beasts have not trodden it,
Nor hath the fierce lion passed thereby.
- 9 He putteth forth his hand upon the flinty rock;
He overturneth the mountains by the roots.
- 10 He cutteth out ⁸channels among the rocks;
And his eye seeth every precious thing.
- 11 He bindeth the streams ⁹that they trickle not;
And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.
- 12 But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
- 13 Man knoweth not the price thereof;

CHAPTER XXVIII.	Neither is it found in the land of the living.	
—♦—	The deep saith, It is not in me :	14
	And the sea saith, It is not with me,	
¹ Or, <i>treasure</i>	It cannot be gotten for ¹ gold,	15
	Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.	
	It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,	16
² Or, <i>beryl</i>	With the precious ² onyx, or the sapphire.	
	Gold and glass cannot equal it :	17
³ Or, <i>vessels</i>	Neither shall the exchange thereof be ³ jewels of fine gold.	
	No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal :	18
⁴ Or, <i>red coral</i>	Yea, the price of wisdom is above ⁴ rubies.	
⁵ Or, <i>pearls</i>	The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,	19
	Neither shall it be valued with pure gold.	
	Whence then cometh wisdom ?	20
	And where is the place of understanding ?	
	Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,	21
	And kept close from the fowls of the air.	
⁵ Heb. <i>Abaddon.</i>	⁵ Destruction and Death say,	22
	We have heard a rumour thereof with our ears.	
	God understandeth the way thereof,	23
	And he knoweth the place thereof.	
	For he looketh to the ends of the earth,	24
	And seeth under the whole heaven ;	
⁶ Or, <i>When he maketh</i>	⁶ To make a weight for the wind ;	25
	Yea, he meteth out the waters by measure.	
	When he made a decree for the rain,	26
	And a way for the lightning of the thunder :	
⁷ Or, <i>recount</i>	Then did he see it, and ⁷ declare it ;	27
	He established it, yea, and searched it out.	
	And unto man he said,	28
	Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ;	
	And to depart from evil is understanding.	

LECTURE IX.

CHAPTERS XXVI—XXVIII.

Job's long Monologue.

WE enter to-day on Job's last speech, the longest and the most deliberate of all his utterances. He will pause in its course once and again, to give his friends an opening for reply. But they have exhausted, as I reminded you, their arguments, and will stand aside, if not helpless and disconcerted, at all events silenced. And through six chapters, Job will pour forth his soul in a prolonged strain, portions of which may appear at first sight tangled and obscure, but which, when carefully read, will be seen, I think, to grow and grow in interest, till its last word is spoken—till one short clause, *the words of Job are ended*, marks its close. I shall not for a moment disguise from you the difficulties which will meet us, in one or two places, in following the thread of what he says. I may not be able to remove them, but I shall certainly not make light of them, or pass them by in silence. And in order to avoid doing what I have done more than once, extending the lecture to an undue length, I will take to-day the first half of this long monologue, its first three chapters—each of which forms a separate portion or speech, with no obvious connexion with either of the other two—and will try to enable you to grasp the meaning of each, and its relation to what goes before.

He begins then, in Chapter xxvi, with three verses of scornful irony, addressed apparently to the last speaker, but

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LECTURE IX. obviously intended for each of the three. 'Poor indeed,' he says—and we cannot but echo his words—'poor the help that thou hast brought to him of whose weakness and unwisdom thou speakest so fluently.'

ver. 2. *How hast thou helped him that is without power!
How hast thou saved the arm that hath no strength!*

ver. 3. *How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom,
And plentifully declared sound knowledge!*

ver. 4. 'Whose,' he asks, 'was the spirit that came from thee? What voice spoke from thy lips? It needed no illumination from on high to see what thou seest; no heaven-sent inspiration to say what thou hast said.' His opening words are full, we see, of a deep, if natural bitterness; and he passes on at once to place side by side with Bildad's picture of God's majesty and greatness, a companion-picture of his own. 'All this,' he seems to say, 'I, even I, know as well as thou, the wise man, knowest it.'

ver. 5. And so, in calm and majestic accents, he enlarges on the plenitude of His power, Who rules, not only those Hosts of Heaven, to which his friend had pointed, but other realms. 'Far beneath the ocean,' he says, 'teeming with its finny tribes, lies the deep underworld of the dead. There, *they that are deceased*, the shades, the *Rephaim*, as we read in the margin of the Revised Version, the thin bloodless ghosts—you see how near we are for a moment to the conception of the Hades to which Ulysses descends in the Odyssey—writhe and tremble at his might.'

ver. 6. *Sheol is naked before him,
And Abaddon hath no covering.*

You will perhaps join with me for a moment in regretting that two Hebrew words should have been retained throughout

untranslated by our Revisers. The former, if translated, as in our older version, by the word 'Hell,' is no doubt exceedingly misleading; but 'the grave,' or 'the underworld,' or 'the world of the dead,' would have at least the advantage of being intelligible; while the latter, *Abaddon*, might surely have been turned by 'Destruction,' or 'the Abyss,' whichever is nearest to its true meaning in the Hebrew. But I pass on. 'All things,' Job has said, in words akin to the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, '*are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*¹.' And then he draws out at length the familiar idea of God as the Creator of the Earth and Heavens. 'That Northern sky,' he says, 'so richly studded with constellations, He stretches over the void; the earth too He hangs beneath it, in the free fields of space.'

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—♦—
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ver. 6.

ver. 7.

He hangeth the earth upon nothing.

ver. 7.

You see how nearly the Poet-philosopher lays his hand on the yet unveiled secrets of Nature. We can hardly wonder that the passage caught the eye of a Kepler, fresh from removing a portion of the veil. 'The Lord of Nature,' he goes on, 'binds up and stores the vast rain floods in the thin cisterns of the clouds. He veils behind those clouds the splendour of His throne. Far below, He sets bounds to the restless sea; to the dim limits of light and darkness; to the remote horizon of the flat disc-like ocean, where the sun sinks into the regions of darkness, whence with dawn he rises from the brightening east.' Each line adds, I think you will agree with me, its own graphic touch. 'Yea,' he says, '*the pillars of heaven*, the towering mountains, totter and tremble before Him.' It is the pealing thunderstorm, rather than the

ver. 8-10.

ver. 11.

¹ Hebrews iv. 13.

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Chap. xxvi.

ver. 12, 13.

earthquake, to which the words seem to point. 'He stirs the deep with His power, and the vast sea-monster, the serpent *Rahab*¹, He pierces through. Yea! *His spirit* lights up the nightly sky, and *His hand* transfixes amongst the stars, the long wreathed and winding length of the eclipse-threatening sun-devouring Dragon.' We are, you see, in the very midst of the ruins and fragments of a primeval and mythical astronomy—the 'footless fancies'—of a far-off age.

Lo, these, he adds, with a sublimity which Bildad had never reached,

ver. 14.

These are but the outskirts of his ways :

And how small a whisper do we hear of HIM!

But the thunder of his power who can understand?

So closes the chapter. There is no special obscurity so far about his language. But the *motive*, as we say, of the picture that he draws, the object of this elaborate description of God's mysterious and all-pervading power, is not clearly indicated.

Is it the same lesson that Bildad drew? 'Such is God's greatness! humble thyself before Him, presumptuous self-asserting mortal.' Or is it a darker suggestion? Is it, '*what is man that Thou art so mindful of him*, that thou stoopest to regard him?' Or is it rather, 'what place in this vast universe has man's welfare, have man's wrongs, man's sufferings?' Is it a thought like that of another Psalmist,

Oh remember how short my time is ;

Wherefore hast thou made all men for nought²?

¹ I have not entered into the question of the verse containing a reference to the passage of the Red Sea, which is based on recognising Rahab as being here a symbol of Egypt, as in Psalm lxxxvii. 4. I cannot but think the more general sense the more natural and probable, as in Chap. ix. 13.

² Ps lxxxix. 46.

Or is it akin to, is it the germ of, that which has so often
found a voice in our own time: that—

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*Many a planet by many a sun, may roll with the dust of a
vanished race*

—♦♦—
Chap. xxvi.

—that ages of living sentient beings have felt all we feel,
and have passed into the void unregarded by Him Who made
them—that ‘*this poor earth’s pale history,*’

‘*What is it all but the trouble of ants, in the gleam of a
million million suns?*’

At all events he has launched his words, and he pauses for
an answer. But no man replies. He stands alone, and after
awhile he ‘again took up,’ we are told, ‘his parable.’ By
parable, you must remember, is meant, not, as sometimes, a
story, or, as at other times, a sententious proverb, but any
teaching conveyed in metaphorical or elevated language. You
may remember how Balaam took up his parable¹, as once and
again he poured forth his rapt and involuntary utterances.

His next words are of a piece with much that he has
said before. He starts, in Chapter xxvii, with one more
solemn protestation of his innocence. It is couched in the
form of an adjuration, we might almost say of an indignant
adjuration, an upbraiding appeal to the Being whom he does
not shrink from taxing with having done him sore wrong:

Chap. xxvii.

As God liveth, who hath taken away my right;

ver. 2.

And the Almighty who hath vexed my soul;

ver. 2.

‘I speak,’ he goes on, ‘as one still of sound mind, though doomed
to die; life still throbs in my veins; the breath of God is still
in my nostrils. My assertion of my innocence is as deliberate
as it is true.’ He utters what he feels to be the last solemn
words of a dying man, of one *whose lips will not speak*

ver. 3.

ver. 4.

¹ Numbers xxiv. 3, 15, 20.

LECTURE IX. *unrighteousness, will not falsify his conscience, neither will his tongue utter deceit.*

Chap.xxvii. And, after this exordium—its force and solemnity you will all feel—he turns for a moment, with an absolute but determined calmness, from the Divine Friend who seems to have deserted him, to the human friends whose ill-timed charges have sunk into his heart :

ver. 5. *God forbid that I should justify you :
Till I die, I will not put away mine integrity from me.*

ver. 6
(Margin). *My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go :
My heart doth not reproach me for any of my days.*

You see how he clings to that on which the whole problem of the book turns, to his sense of being at once innocent and afflicted, to the confirmation added by his own conscience to the description given of him by God and man—that he *had feared God and hated evil*¹.

And then follows a passage which forms one of those difficulties, which I warned you just now would confront us from time to time, and which I promised myself and you neither to evade nor undervalue. It begins simply enough in verse 7. ‘Let my enemies,’ he says, ‘take their side, if they will, with the evil doers and profane, with whom they class me. Let others join the ranks of God’s enemies. I will not. Can such men,’ he asks, ‘have any trust at all in God? Could they raise their voices to Him, *in all time of their tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment?*

ver. 8. *For what is the hope of the godless, though he get him gain,
When God taketh away his soul?*

ver. 9. *Will God hear his cry,
When trouble cometh upon him?*

¹ Ch. i. 1, 8; ii. 3.

*Will he delight himself in the Almighty,
And call upon God at all times?*

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As we read the words, we cannot but recall Job's own complaints—they still ring in our ears—that his own cries in his hour of need had been unheard of God, his own prayers unanswered.

But then, from the 11th verse to the end of the Chapter, there follows a passage which may well cause us some real perplexity.

It is a picture which their own experience, he says, will confirm—*behold all ye yourselves have seen it*—of the doom, ver. 12, 13. the sure doom, that waits on the wicked, here on earth.

Its separate details are familiar to you, and I will not do more than indicate them briefly. 'His children may be numerous, but they will fall by the sword, or by famine, or by pestilence, the three terrible symbols and ministers¹ of God's wrath. The strokes will fall so fast, that'—some of us may remember the pathetic touch in the Greek historian's description of the plague at Athens—'even the widows of his house will have no time to wail². His treasures, and his changes of raiment,' the familiar marks of Eastern wealth, 'will be divided amongst, and worn by, the just. His sumptuous palace shall pass away, as the thin covering from which the moth slips forth—or as the frail tenement of boughs, the lodge³ in a garden of cucumbers, that shelters for a while the watchman. He lies down rich, but he lies down no more.' *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.* ver. 15. ver. 16, 17. ver. 18. 'The morning brings to him, with its dawning light, the dark-

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 13; 1 Chron. xxi. 12.

² The meaning may be: 'There shall be no widows, they too shall fall.' Psalm lxxviii. 64. Cf. Thucydides, ii. 51, καὶ τὰς ὀλοφύρσεις τῶν ἀπογιννομένων καὶ οἱ οἰκεῖοι ἐξέκαμνον, ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ κακοῦ νικώμενοι.

³ Isaiah i. 8.

ver. 19
(Margin).

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 Chap. xxvii. ver. 20-22. ness of death.' Death and its terrors are likened, first, to a flood of waters; next, to the fierce and devastating wind from the desert steppes, of which we read in the details of Job's own tragedy; and thirdly, to a storm of arrows launched on him by God. 'Vain will be his attempts to fly. His doom is sealed, and he falls amidst universal execration:'

ver. 23. *Men shall clap their hands at him,
 And shall hiss him out of his place.*

The picture, as you see, when once a few patches of obscurity are removed, is exceedingly vivid and striking. It may well hang side by side with many such, to be found alike in this book and in the Psalter.

But you feel the difficulty? Job seems suddenly to have joined hands with the very friends against whose teaching his words have been one long passionate protest. He is using the precise language which they use. Not once, but again and again, they have placed before *him* the very self-same picture which he now holds up to *them*. It is in fact nothing more than the expansion of words used by the first who spoke to him¹. It is the forcible reiteration of language used by each in turn of those with whom he has engaged in such terrible conflict. These 'deep waters,' these 'arrows of God,' that 'raging storm'—who is their victim, but the very Job who now speaks of them as the sure and certain penalty of the wicked? And what was his language but lately? He spoke of God as protecting the wicked in² life; of their going down softly to the grave; of their children dancing to the sound of the timbrel and the pipe. The thought goaded him to madness. A 'great shuddering' came over him, he said, as he dwelt on it. Yet now he speaks of God's judgments,

¹ Chap. iv. 7-11.

² Chap. xxi. 5-13.

the very strokes, some of them, that have fallen on himself, as falling on the guilty! He speaks even as his friends have spoken, even as so many Psalmists speak. How is this? Have all the doubts that perplexed him disappeared? Does he too see no puzzle, no inequality, no anomalies in human life? He has left, some of you may add, those of us who do feel these doubts, and joined those who say: 'men get their deserts in life. The successful deserve their success, the prosperous their prosperity, the rich their riches. Loss, sorrow, poverty, bereavement, pain, mean defeat; and God is on the side of the victorious, of the "strongest battalions," not of the defeated. The fit survive; the unfit perish.' Perhaps all this means, we may say, that Job has passed into a serener air. He is taking a truer and less morbid view of life. His friends were right, he wrong, and he allows it.

I do not think, my friends, that this will quite satisfy you. Such sentiments could scarcely come from the lips of one who, in the same breath, speaks in very different language of the Almighty as having *taken away*, refused him, i.e. *his right*, and who protests so solemnly his own innocence in the face of his unexampled sufferings. It is impossible that he can accept so calmly, and so unreservedly, the existence of a law of which his own case seems so flagrant a violation.

So grave is the difficulty that even very thoughtful and reverent and sober minded commentators have felt it quite insoluble. It was not some daring German 'Neologian,' but an English Divine¹ of unimpeached orthodoxy, who suggested long ago that the whole passage is one which, having gone astray in some misplacement of ancient manuscripts, had been ascribed to Job, but was really the missing address

¹ Dr. Kennicott, founder of Hebrew Scholarships at Oxford; died 1784

LECTURE of the third friend—of the Zophar, who in the third and final
IX. cycle of speeches was, you remember, unaccountably silent.

Chap. xxvii. I mention the suggestion that you may see how keenly the difficulty has been felt. For myself it seems to me almost impossible to detach the passage from the words of Job which immediately precede it, without some laceration of the text, and I would rather place it side by side with the last
Chap. xxvi. chapter. As there he drew a companion-picture to his friends' representation of the omnipotence of God, so here he sketches the fate that no doubt *often* falls, and falls deservedly, on the wicked.

'I too,' he says, 'have seen their doom as well as you. Vain to preach to me of the greatness of God, I know it well ! Vain to describe to me the penalty that awaits on crime, I know that too ! All this have I seen ; it is, so far and in a measure, true. But God's greatness does not prove that there is no injustice on this low earth ; and God's just punishments, falling from time to time on great criminals, do not disprove my innocence, or dispose of the sight too common still of unpunished wickedness and afflicted righteousness.'

The way of the world still exists, we all know, as a sad phrase to express what is not just, but unjust. It is still a proverb for something that falls far short of, is even the very reverse of, absolute justice. It is hard for us, it was hard for Job, to identify this with God's rule—with absolute justice, absolute beneficence.

I do not know how far you can accept this solution. It seems to me that the two passages, the two chapters, so read, each in a measure obscure, obscure i.e. so far as their object and purpose is concerned, assist to explain, and account for and illustrate, each other.

And after this, speaking with a sustained calm and

dignity for which, as I have reminded you already, we look in vain in his earlier speeches, Job breaks forth in the next chapter into what may be called a hymn, a stately lyric, on the greatness and unsearchableness of Wisdom. After reading it through, as it stands in our older translation, you may not improbably lay it down with a blank feeling of mingled admiration and despair. To attach to it any consecutive meaning, to find for it as a whole any fit place in Job's meditations, seems impossible. If, however, you read it carefully in the New Version, you will, I think, soon learn to appreciate its exceeding force and beauty. You will be struck by the fresh region, the new world of imagery, into which it invites you. You will understand how it is that Hebrew scholars have placed it side by side with St. Paul's immortal chapter on Love or Charity.

And, so read, we find ourselves able to see something of its connexion with what goes before. 'Yes,' he seems to say, 'God *is* great.' 'Yes,' he says again, 'God *does*, as you tell me, bring retribution on the guilty.' But 'Ah,' he feels and adds, 'how scanty our power of reading His nature and His purposes. Man can wring treasures from the earth; he can explore regions which no eagle's eye has scanned, no lion's foot has trodden; but wisdom is beyond his grasp.' And with this thought strong within him, he gives it utterance in lines whose force and power a few words of explanation may help you fully to realise. They may remind some here of a very different, yet analogous chorus of the poet Sophocles¹. He too speaks of the conquests that man's restless brain has achieved, and he too recognises the inexorable limits that shut in so closely the range of his domain.

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¹ Antigone, 332-375.

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 ver. 1, 2.
- ‘Silver,’ he says, in the opening verse, ‘has a source that may be tracked. Its veins run beneath the earth; man finds them. Gold can be searched for and crushed from the hard quartz, or separated from the mud in which it lurks. Man finds it: and from the earth he treads on, he wins the iron, and smelts and pours in liquid streams the copper that he covets.’
- ver. 3.
- ‘Where is the bound to his daring and his skill? Deep beneath earth’s surface, he plunges into the dismal mine.’ You see at once that we are called away from the surroundings of desert life, and of the life, so far as we can judge, of any dweller in Palestine, to the experiences of early miners. Whither are we called? Shall we say to the work of Phenicians in Lebanon, or to Upper Egypt, or to the peninsula of Sinai, or even further still from the centre of Hebrew life? ‘Yea,’ he goes on, ‘from the very entrails of the earth he brings his treasures; the metals that advance his civilisation
- ver. 3.
- and embellish his life. *He setteth an end to darkness; the sunless subterranean realms, the stones of thick darkness and of the shadow of death, he lights up with his flaring torches.*
- ver. 4.
- He *breaks open*, and drives, as we say, with his multitudinous and incessant blows, the deep-sunk shaft and long tunnelled gallery, and there *swings to and fro* on his adventurous path, *forgotten of the foot* of him who treads earth’s surface above him.’ How graphic this ancient picture of the bold miner of the early world! How wholly it is lost in our older version.
- ver. 5.
- But, he goes on: ‘Above spreads the surface of mother earth, with her waving cornfields, rich with human sustenance. Below, her very entrails are torn and devastated as by flames.’ The words seem to carry us on through the ages to the blasting processes of modern engineering. The real reference is, I

presume, to rocks rent and split by the application of fire, with which more primitive toilers had become familiar. But 'rich,' he says, 'is the reward. Among those riven rocks is *the place of sapphires*; in that upturned dust lie the grains of gold. Keen and searching is the vulture's sight'—as he soars above Babylon, it is written in the Talmud, he will descry a carcass in the land of Israel—'but man has pierced for himself a path, which'

No bird of prey knoweth,

Neither hath the falcon's eye seen it:

'along that darksome path no young lion hath stalked in his pride, no king of beasts hath prowled thereby. But man is there. He lays his conquering hand *upon the flinty rock*. The very *roots of the mountains he overturns*. He drives his tunnels deep through earth's stony bed; he precious treasures his keen eye detects; he *binds up* her subterranean watercourses; he forbids their dripping springs to *weep* (so runs the original), to ooze and trickle through his galleries, and mar his work. Yea, *whatever is hidden*—put away, as it were, by the hand of nature, to conceal it from his view—he tracks to its home, and *brings it to the light*.'

It is, you will all agree with me, a very remarkable passage. Its thoughts are clothed of course in an ancient form; but some here would believe it to be no impossible task to translate its language into that of an ode or speech in commemoration of the triumphs of applied science over the secrets of nature, such as might be uttered by Poet or Orator towards the close of the nineteenth century. It might furnish hints for no mere rhapsody, but for an account in plain prose of the progress of engineering science, such as might be put before

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ver. 6, 7.

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ver. 11.

ver. 12.

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a gathering of some scientific association, or of civil engineers met to celebrate the completion of some tunnel driven beneath an Alpine range, or an English Estuary.

‘Yes,’ he now goes on to say, ‘all this man can do. He can lay open the hidden secrets of earth ; but does he,’ he asks abruptly, ‘come nearer by one step to true wisdom ? Is there not a region to which no miner’s path points the way ?’

ver. 12.

Where shall wisdom be found ?

And where is the place of understanding ?

And to us also, my friends, the question is ‘a parable.’ We too must say in the words of a leader of modern science¹, that ‘when science has completed her mission upon earth, the finite known will still be embraced by the infinite unknown.’ And in this ‘infinite unknown’ the Patriarch Job places the abode of true wisdom, of the knowledge of the full relation between God and human destiny, of which science can tell us nothing. ‘Where,’ he asks in the second *strophe*, so to speak, of this great hymn, ‘where is Wisdom to be found ? It cannot be bought or trafficked for. It has no local habitation like a material substance :’

ver. 12.

ver. 13.

Man knoweth not the price thereof ;

Neither is it found in the land of the living.

And on both these ideas he enlarges in a series of short *stanzas*, if I may so call them, whose substance I need only briefly indicate. ‘Man cannot track her to her home in the habitable earth, in the underworld, or in the rolling sea :’

ver. 14.

The Abyss says It is not in me :

And the sea says It is not with me.

ver. 15.

‘It is vain to try and purchase her with gold of Ophir,

¹ Professor Tyndall. Speech at the unveiling of T. Carlyle’s statue.

to weigh out bars of silver, to spread out as her price the costly gems.' You will find in the passage a curious enumeration of, we may conjecture, every precious stone which was familiar to the age at which the book is written; on the careful identification of each of these much time, learning, and labour has been expended. And having said so much, he asks once more: 'where then is the home of this Wisdom? From the keen-eyed birds that soar aloft, It is hidden. To the world of death below comes only a dull inarticulate murmur of Its secrets. God alone can read them, He whose eye pierceth through heaven and earth. And on the day when He impressed His laws upon Nature, when He gave the winds their force, and meted out the waters, and set in order the hidden forces which rule the rain, the lightning, and the thunder, then WISDOM was by His side, and He revealed her in the material creation, gave to her her place, established, proved, and tested her. But *unto man He said*—and here lies the sum of the whole chapter—'to man the highest wisdom is to fear God, the truest understanding is to depart from evil:'

Behold, the fear of Jehovah, that is wisdom;

And to depart from evil is understanding.

And having reached this point he pauses, and we will follow his words no further to-day. I have not attempted to conceal from you, that, magnificent as I am sure you will feel these three chapters to be, they have their difficulties.

Judging by the standard of modern thought, or of the master-pieces of Greek literature, we should take each chapter separately, and ask in turn: Why this description, sublime if you will, of God's power and majesty? Or why this sketch of the doom of evil doers? Or why this lyrical out-

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ver. 16-19.

ver. 20.

ver. 21.

ver. 22.

ver. 23.

ver. 24.

ver. 25.

ver 26.

ver. 27.

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burst on the unattainableness of the highest wisdom? What place has each in turn in the development of Job's thoughts, of Job's character and story, which it is the aim of this book to put before us?

As regards the first two of these passages, I have ventured to offer you some clue. I do not know how far you have found in that which I have suggested a satisfactory solution. The place of this last chapter, we can, I think, recognise. Job in his calmer mood feels that he has attempted to deal with questions too high for him. He forgets for a while his own pangs and sorrows; the pressure of God's heavy hand is withdrawn, and there rises before him a vision of that wisdom, which, as in the opening portion of the Book of Proverbs, so here, and in later generations, as for instance in the age at which the 'Book of Wisdom' was written, embodied to the pious Jew, the combination of the highest *knowledge* with the truest *goodness*.

And this, in his baffled and wearied, yet more tranquil, frame, he feels to be beyond his reach. There is a touch at once of hopelessness and of cheering faith in his closing words.

He dwells on the unapproachable, the inscrutable nature of true wisdom, in terms which the most enlightened Christian may in one sense fully echo. 'We know'—to borrow at random words whose interest lies in their having been used by my illustrious Predecessor to an American audience¹—'we know that what we see forms but the outskirts of creation; that the power and the wisdom which rule this vast universe must lie beyond the reach, not only of our understanding, but also of our furthest speculation.' Yet we know also how much of

¹ Stanley's Sermons and Addresses in America, p. 141.

God's nature, which was hidden from Job, has been revealed to us in Christ; that if we 'know in part' only, yet in part we *do* know; and we may thankfully welcome and accept the vast revelations of that book of nature which we have received from the progress of human science.

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But when all this has been fully acknowledged, we still feel the force of Job's closing words, that there is something higher yet than any knowledge regarded as knowledge, whether it be scientific, or whether it be theological knowledge. *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.* To that best wisdom may we all attain; may we learn to realise in even a deeper sense than was revealed to the Prophet¹, that the truest wisdom is *to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.*

ver. 28.

¹ Micah vi. 8.

February 20, 1886.

LECTURE X.

CHAPTERS XXIX—XXXI.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. XXIX—XXXI.)

- 29 And Job again took up his parable, and said,
 2 Oh that I were as in the months of old,
 As in the days when God watched over me ;
 3 When his lamp shined ¹ upon my head,
 And by his light I walked through darkness ;
 4 As I was in ² the ripeness of my days,
 When the ³ secret of God was upon my tent ;
 5 When the Almighty was yet with me,
 And my children were about me ;
 6 When my steps were washed with butter,
 And the rock poured me out rivers of oil !
 7 When I went forth to the gate unto the city,
 When I prepared my seat in the ⁴ street,
 8 The young men saw me and hid themselves,
 And the aged rose up and stood ;
 9 The princes refrained talking,
 And laid their hand on their mouth ;
 10 The voice of the nobles was ⁵ hushed,
 And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.
 11 For when the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me ;
 And when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness unto me :
 12 Because I delivered the poor that cried,
 The fatherless also, ⁶ that had none to help him.
 13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me :
 And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
 14 I put on righteousness, and it ⁷ clothed me :
 My justice was as a robe and a ⁸ diadem.
 15 I was eyes to the blind,

CHAPTER XXIX.

¹ Or, *above*

² Heb. *my days of autumn.*

³ Or, *counsel*
Or, *friendship*

⁴ Or, *broad place*

⁵ Heb. *hid*

⁶ Or, *and him that had &c.*

⁷ Or, *clothed itself with me*

⁸ Or, *turban*

CHAPTER	And feet was I to the lame.	
XXIX.	I was a father to the needy :	16
→→→	And ¹ the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.	
¹ Or, the	And I brake the ² jaws of the unrighteous,	17
cause	And plucked the prey out of his teeth.	
which I	Then I said, I shall die ³ in my nest,	18
knew not	And I shall multiply my days as ⁴ the sand :	
² Heb.	My root is ⁵ spread out ⁶ to the waters,	19
great teeth.	And the dew lieth all night upon my branch :	
³ Or, beside	My glory is fresh in me,	20
Heb. with	And my bow is renewed in my hand.	
⁴ Or, the	Unto me men gave ear, and waited,	21
phanix	And kept silence for my counsel.	
⁵ Heb.	After my words they spake not again ;	22
opened.	And my speech dropped upon them.	
⁶ Or, by	And they waited for me as for the rain ;	23
⁷ Or, I	And they opened their mouth wide <i>as</i> for the latter rain.	
smiled on	⁷ If I laughed on them, they ⁸ believed <i>it</i> not ;	24
them when	And the light of my countenance they cast not down.	
they had no	I chose out their way, and sat <i>as</i> chief,	25
confidence	And dwelt as a king in the army,	
⁸ Or, were	As one that comforteth the mourners.	
not	But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, 30	
confident	Whose fathers I disdained to set with the dogs of my flock.	
⁹ Or,	Yea, the strength of their hands, whereto should it profit me ? 2	
vigour	Men in whom ⁹ ripe age is perished.	
¹⁰ Or, They	They are gaunt with want and famine ;	3
flee into	¹⁰ They gnaw the dry ground, ¹¹ in the gloom of wasteness and	
the wilder-	desolation.	
ness, into	They pluck salt-wort by the bushes ;	4
&c.	And the roots of the broom <i>are</i> ¹² their meat.	
¹¹ Or,	They are driven forth from the midst <i>of men</i> ;	5
which	They cry after them as after a thief.	
yesternight	¹³ In the clefts of the valleys must they dwell,	6
was Or, on	In holes of the earth and of the rocks.	
the eve of	Among the bushes they bray ;	7
¹² Or, to	Under the ¹⁴ nettles they ¹⁵ are gathered together.	
warm		
them		
¹³ Or, In		
the most		
gloomy		
valleys		
¹⁴ Or, wild		
vetches		
¹⁵ Or,		
stretch		
themselves		

- 8 *They are* children of fools, yea, children of ¹ base men ;
They ² were scourged out of the land.
- 9 And now I am become their song,
Yea, I am a byword unto them.
- 10 They abhor me, they stand aloof from me,
And spare not to spit ³ in my face.
- 11 For he hath loosed ⁴ his cord, and afflicted me,
And they have cast off the bridle before me.
- 12 Upon my right hand rise the ⁵ rabble ;
They thrust aside my feet,
And they cast up against me their ways of destruction.
- 13 They ⁶ mar my path,
They set forward my calamity,
Even men that have no helper.
- 14 ⁷ As through a wide breach they come :
In the midst of the ruin they roll themselves *upon me*.
- 15 Terrors are turned upon me,
⁸ They chase ⁹ mine honour as the wind ;
And my welfare is passed away as a cloud.
- 16 And now my soul is poured out ¹⁰ within me ;
Days of affliction have taken hold upon me.
- 17 In the night season my bones are ¹¹ pierced ¹² in me,
And ¹³ the *pains* that gnaw me take no rest.
- 18 ¹⁴ By the great force *of my disease* is my garment disfigured :
It bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.
- 19 He hath cast me into the mire,
And I am become like dust and ashes.
- 20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not answer me :
I stand up, and thou lookest at me.
- 21 Thou art turned to be cruel to me :
With the might of thy hand thou persecutest me.
- 22 Thou liftest me up to the wind, thou causest me to ride *upon it* ;
And thou dissolvest me in the storm.
- 23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death,
And to ¹⁵ the house appointed for all living.
- 24 ¹⁶ Surely against a ruinous heap he will not put forth his hand ;
Though *it be* in his destruction, *one may utter* a cry because
of these things.

CHAPTER
XXX.

¹ Heb. men
of no name.

² Or, are
outcasts
from the
land

³ Or, at the
sight of me

⁴ According
to another
reading,
my cord
(or bow-
string).

⁵ Or, brood

⁶ Or, break
up

⁷ Or, As a
wide break-
ing in of
waters

⁸ Or, Thou
chasest

⁹ Or, my
nobility

¹⁰ Heb.

upon.

¹¹ Or, corro-

ded and
drop away
from me

¹² Heb.

from off.

¹³ Or, my
sincres

take &c.

¹⁴ Or, By
his great
force is &c.

¹⁵ Or, the
house of
meeting for
&c.

¹⁶ Or,

*Howbeit
doth not
one stretch*

out the hand in his fall? or in his calamity therefore cry for help

CHAPTER	Did not I weep for him that was in trouble?	25
XXX.	Was not my soul grieved for the needy?	
—♦—	When I looked for good, then evil came ;	26
	And when I waited for light, there came darkness.	
	My bowels boil, and rest not ;	27
	Days of affliction are come upon me.	
¹ Or,	I go ¹ mourning without the sun :	28
<i>blackened,</i>	I stand up in the assembly, and cry for help.	
<i>but not by</i>	I am a brother to jackals,	29
<i>the sun</i>	And a companion to ostriches.	
	My skin is black, <i>and falleth</i> from me,	30
	And my bones are burned with heat.	
	Therefore is my harp <i>turned</i> to mourning,	31
	And my pipe into the voice of them that weep.	
	I made a covenant with mine eyes ;	31
	How then should I look upon a maid?	
² Or, <i>For</i>	² For what <i>is</i> the portion of God from above,	2
<i>what</i>	And the heritage of the Almighty from on high?	
<i>portion</i>	Is it not calamity to the unrighteous,	3
<i>should I</i>	And disaster to the workers of iniquity?	
<i>have of</i>	Doth not he see my ways,	4
<i>God . . .</i>	And number all my steps?	
<i>and what</i>	If I have walked with vanity,	5
<i>heritage</i>	And my foot hath hastened to deceit ;	
<i>&c. ? Is</i>	(Let me be weighed in an even balance,	6
<i>there not</i>	That God may know mine integrity ;)	
<i>calamity</i>	If my step hath turned out of the way,	7
<i>&c. ?</i>	And mine heart walked after mine eyes,	
	And if any spot hath cleaved to mine hands :	
	Then let me sow, and let another eat ;	8
³ Or, <i>my</i>	Yea, let ³ the produce of my field be rooted out.	
<i>offspring</i>	If mine heart have been enticed unto a woman,	9
<i>Heb. my</i>	And I have laid wait at my neighbour's door :	
<i>produce.</i>	Then let my wife grind unto another,	10
	And let others bow down upon her.	
	For that were an heinous crime ;	11
	Yea, it were an iniquity to be punished by the judges :	

- 12 For it is a fire that consumeth unto ¹ Destruction,
And would root out all mine increase.
- 13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-
servant,
When they contended with me :
- 14 What then shall I do when God riseth up ?
And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ?
- 15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him ?
And did not one fashion us in the womb ?
- 16 If I have withheld ² the poor from *their* desire,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ;
- 17 Or have eaten my morsel alone,
And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof ;
- 18 (Nay, from my youth he grew up with me as with a father,
And I have been her guide from my mother's womb ;)
- 19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,
Or that the needy had no covering ;
- 20 If his loins have not blessed me,
And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep ;
- 21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,
Because I saw my help in the gate :
- 22 Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade,
And mine arm be broken from the bone.
- 23 For calamity from God was a terror to me,
And by reason of his excellency I could do nothing.
- 24 If I have made gold my hope,
And have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence ;
- 25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great,
And because mine hand had gotten much ;
- 26 If I beheld ³ the sun when it shined,
Or the moon walking in brightness ;
- 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed,
And ⁴ my mouth hath kissed my hand :
- 28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judges :
For I should have ⁵ lied to God that is above.
- 29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,
Or lifted up myself when evil found him ;

CHAPTER
XXXI.

—♦—
¹ Heb.
Abaddon.
See ch.
xxvi. 6.

² Or, *ought*
that the
poor
desired

³ Heb. *the*
light.

⁴ Heb. *my*
hand hath
kissed my
mouth.

⁵ Or,
denied God

CHAPTER XXXI.	(Yea, I suffered not my ¹ mouth to sin	30
—♦—	By asking his life with a curse;)	
¹ Heb. palate.	If the men of my tent said not,	31
² Or, <i>Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.</i>	² Who can find one that hath not been satisfied with his flesh?	
³ Heb. the way.	The stranger did not lodge in the street;	32
⁴ Or, <i>after the manner of men</i>	But I opened my doors to ³ the traveller;	
⁵ Heb. mark.	If ⁴ like Adam I covered my transgressions,	33
⁶ Heb. book.	By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom;	
	Because I feared the great multitude,	34
	And the contempt of families terrified me,	
	So that I kept silence, and went not out of the door—	
	Oh that I had one to hear me!	35
	(Lo, here is my ⁵ signature, let the Almighty answer me;)	
	And <i>that I had</i> the ⁶ indictment which mine adversary hath written!	
	Surely I would carry it upon my shoulder;	36
	I would bind it unto me as a crown.	
⁷ Or, <i>present it to him</i>	I would declare unto him the number of my steps;	37
⁸ Heb. strength.	As a prince would I ⁷ go near unto him.	
⁹ Or, <i>thorns</i>	If my land cry out against me,	38
¹⁰ Or, <i>noisome weeds</i>	And the furrows thereof weep together;	
	If I have eaten the ⁸ fruits thereof without money,	39
	Or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:	
	Let ⁹ thistles grow instead of wheat,	40
	And ¹⁰ cockle instead of barley.	

The words of Job are ended.

LECTURE X.

CHAPTERS XXIX—XXXI.

Job's Monologue (continued).

*The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ;
And to depart from evil is understanding.*

LECTURE
X.

So, you will remember, Job ended his great 'Hymn to Wisdom,' if I may so call it, which we read when last we met. And in saying this, and in much that led up to this, he has soared for a while above himself; risen to a calmer and serener level. For he has recognised, implicitly at least, that there may be infinite perplexities and anomalies which human and finite intelligence can never solve; that there are locked doors around him to which he has no key.

And in so doing he has anticipated in no small degree the answer, the healing answer, which later on he is to receive. He has emphasised also the great truth, in which, may we not say, all true members of God's Church are agreed, that Duty stands, if we may dare to say so, on a higher level than even Knowledge; that it is to him who would do the will of God, that God reveals Himself most fully. Is it not true, even now, that the highest aim of those who would teach the Gospel of Christ is not the acceptance of a code of doctrines, however sacred, but the rising through that Gospel to a new life?

And now, having said so much, he returns, through three final chapters, to that which for a time he had left in the back-

LECTURE X.
 ground, his own individual destiny. His friends are still silent; and he pours out his full soul in a long and uninterrupted soliloquy. How does he begin?

Job bemoaneth himself, is the expressive heading of our Authorised Version, *of his former prosperity and honour*. It is a familiar element in many tragedies:

*This is truth the poet sings,
 That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier
 things.*

Never has that sad office of the human memory been put forward more movingly than in the prolonged monologue of this memorable tragedy.

Chap. xxix. 'Oh,' he says, in the first words of Chapter xxix, '*Oh that*
 ver. 1. *I were as in the months*'—the *moons* is the word in the original—'*as in the moons of old,*

In the days when God watched over me;
 ver. 3. when His light shone high above my head, and guided my steps through the encircling gloom;'

*When his lamp shined upon my head,
 And by his light I walked through darkness.*

You see the touching contrast to the present lot of him who once more feels himself forsaken of God, and plunged in that 'outer darkness,' which to the Eastern mind is the type of all
 ver. 4. that is terrible and painful. '*Oh that I were,*' he continues, '*as in the summer ripeness of my earlier days,* in the fulness and fruitfulness of life, *when the secret of God, His familiar fellowship and friendship, rested upon and hallowed my tent*'—the last word brings us once more within the circle of the
 ver. 5. patriarchal age—'*when He, the Almighty, was yet with me;*' and then he adds, with 'a touch of nature' that 'makes us kin' across the ages with that bereaved Father, '*when my*

children were about me; and when a now lost wealth and abundance came to me unbidden, as I walked along life's common highway:'

LECTURE
X.

Chap. xxix.
ver. 6.

*When my steps were washed with butter,
And the rock poured me out rivers of oil.*

And then—no wandering Bedouin Sheikh, remember, but one who dwelt in his own domain outside city walls—he recalls in expressive accents the days, when—as he entered *the Gate*, and *took his seat in the broad space*¹ within it, where the chiefs met in council, and where justice was administered—the young retired in awe, *the aged rose up and stood*, and princes and chiefs were silent till he spoke. And it was not the great only and the powerful who honoured him as one greater, more powerful, than themselves:

ver. 7.

ver. 7-9.

When the ear heard me, then it blessed me;

ver. 11.

And when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me;

The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me:

ver. 13.

And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

And why? Because he cared for them:

Because I delivered the poor that cried,

ver. 12.

The fatherless also, that had none to help him.

'Because,' he goes on to say, 'I made righteousness and justice'—the thirst for which is inherent in human nature, and the need for which is so sorely felt in Eastern lands—'I made these part of my very nature; I clothed myself in them;'

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:

ver. 14.

My justice was as a robe and a diadem.

It is, I need hardly remind you, a common figure in the sacred writings. We remember the magnificent description

¹ See margin to Revised Version.

- LECTURE of the king that was to arise 'out of the stem of Jesse' in the
 X. eleventh chapter of Isaiah: how, *righteousness was to be the*
 Chap. xxix. *girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins—*
 how St. Paul bids us *put on*, more than *the breastplate of*
righteousness, more than *the armour of light*; bids us *put*
on the Lord Jesus.¹
- ver. 15. 'Yes,' he adds, *I was eyes to the blind,*
And feet was I to the lame.
- ver. 16. *I was a father to the needy:*
And the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.
 'Even the unbefriended stranger I could not bear to leave
 with wrongs unrighted, while to the oppressors I was a
 terror:'
- ver. 17. *I brake the jaws of the wicked,*
And plucked the spoil out of his teeth.
 'And all seemed to go well with me.' Even as the Psalmist²
said in his prosperity, I shall never be removed: Thou, Lord,
of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong; so 'I too,' says
- ver. 18. Job, 'thought that I should die in my nest; even as'—so some
 interpreters turn the 18th verse—'the sacred phoenix³ that
 dies after five centuries of life, dies in flames in its nest of
- ver. 19. spices. Yes! I felt as a tree deep-rooted in watered ground,
- ver. 20. with heaven's dews resting on my branches; *my glory*
seemed fresh and growing, my bow, my strength i.e. renewing
*itself with the strength*⁴ *of youth.*' 'Yes,' he says, in the last
- ver. 20-23. stanza of this picture of his happier days, 'men waited in
 silence for my words; they welcomed them, as men welcome
- ver. 24. in a dry land the long looked for, life-giving, rain. I smiled

¹ Eph. vi. 14; Rom. xiii. 12, 14.² Ps. xxx. 6. (Prayer Book Version.)³ See margin, Revised Version.⁴ The idea seems that of Isaiah xl. 31, or Psalm ciii. 5.

when their hearts failed them, and my untroubled calm, proof against all their fears, restored¹ their courage. *I chose their way for them* in their perplexity; *I sat as chief* among them; I was as a king at the head of his host; but I was as a king who could do more than command and lead, who could bring comfort to those who were in distress and mourning.' So ends the chapter. You will all recognise the antique simplicity and homely dignity of the picture which it draws.

LECTURE
X.
→→→
Chap. xxix.
ver. 25.

'Such was I once,' he resumes in Chapter xxx, 'What am I now? Behold me here on this dung heap! He, before whom princes and nobles kept silence, is a butt to-day for the scorn of the very boys of a degraded race, *whose fathers* I had classed,' he adds in scorn, 'below the very *sheep-dogs of my flock*; too nerveless and debased to be of profit, even as slaves.' The Psalmist's soul was *filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and with the despitefulness of the proud*². Job feels himself even more *utterly despised* than he.

Chap. xxx.
ver. 1.
ver. 1, 2.

And then follows a most curious and life-like picture of some tribe, oppressed and despised by the robust and more civilised community, in whose close neighbourhood it drags out a precarious existence; a feeble, half-starved, dislodged, and outcast remnant, it would seem, of some aboriginal race. He pauses in the recital of his own sad sorrows to put before us this strange fragment, photographed, as it were, from the life of that far-off world. It has found its parallel in later ages, in our own colonies and elsewhere, and doubtless again and again in many an unwritten history. We see before us the few and feeble 'natives,' as we might say, *gaunt*,

ver. 3.

¹ *I smiled on them when they had no confidence.* (R. V., margin.)

² Psalm cxxiii. 3, 4.

- LECTURE X.
 Chap. xxx. says Job, *with want and famine*, 'gnawing the dry and naked steppe, like hunger-bitten goats or cattle; now plucking the poor weeds that grow beneath the scanty shade of the desert bushes; now feeding upon roots; driven away with curses; *halloed after as thieves*,' he says, 'if they venture among the habitations or fields of a more settled people; forced to make their home among dismal ravines, *in holes in the rocks*,' very *troglodytes*, as we should say. 'There among the bushes,' he tells us, 'in among the tall nettles, where they swarm, may be heard the inarticulate chatter of the barbarous braying language of these *children of base men*,' or rather of *men of no name*; without, that is, any knowledge of their forefathers—a memory dearly prized, as essential to the dignity of man, in all Eastern races—'wretched outlaws who are driven with blows from the settled haunts of civilised man.'

Am I wrong in reproducing to you at length the graphic details of this strange side-picture? It is a companion one, though given with a different motive, to that of the oppressed labourers which we had in Chapter xxiv. I hardly know which is the more interesting, as a fragment, so to speak, of primeval social history¹.

¹ It is once more interesting to notice the entire indifference to the literal and historical meaning of this striking passage, of one so capable himself of a large-hearted enthusiasm for what to a Roman Patrician must have seemed merely barbarous races as was the great Gregory. To him these miserable outcasts are a foreshadowing of heretics and heresiarchs, of Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Entyches, &c. The 'gnawing the bark of trees' represents the looking merely to the literal or external sense of Scripture, and missing the internal and spiritual meaning. The whole passage is singularly characteristic of a mode of thought and of interpretation once almost universal—which at one time even extended to commentators on the Homeric Poems—and to which it is difficult for a modern reader to assign its real value in educating the mind of Christendom.

‘Yet even these,’ he says, ‘make me the sport of their coarse jests, the burden of their rude songs of scorn.’ You remember how a Psalmist¹ says—

LECTURE
X.

They that sit in the gate talk of me :

Chap. xxx.
ver. 9.

And I am the song of the drunkards.

‘So even these,’ says Job, ‘*stand aloof* and avoid me, or if they come near, *spare not to spit* at me.’ So low has he fallen, the Job who was once put before us as ‘the greatest of the sons of the East.’

ver. 10.

And as he points to the contrast between former happiness and present misery, the calm that he has preserved throughout his recent words becomes ruffled once more ; and he pours out his lamentations and appeals in words troubled as the heart from which they issue. ‘God,’ he cries once more, ‘even my God, hath forsaken me ; and even as He has let fly His arrows against me, and *loosed His bowstring*, so mankind shake off the bridle of respect and pity. At *my right hand*, that on which I would lean, as I tread the hard steep path of life, *the rabble* press against me ; they trip up my feet ; they make that rugged path more rugged still. Yea !’ he says, ‘*men that have no helper, abjects*, in whom the Psalmist² found his worst foes, hardened by their own hard lot, come together against one who is so fallen from his high estate. High and low refuse their sympathy, and break in upon my solitary soul, as foemen force their way through a gaping breach :’

ver. 11.

ver. 12.

ver. 13.

As through a wide breach they come :

ver. 14.

In the midst of the ruin they roll themselves upon me.

‘And as men who once held me in respect and awe, now scorn me, so my own spirit has lost its calm. *Terrors are*

ver. 15.

¹ Ps. lxix. 12. (R. V.)

² Ps. xxxv. 15. (Prayer Book.)

LECTURE X. *turned upon me.* They drive me this way and that, like wild winds. Mine ancient courage,' says poor Job, 'has gone like

Chap. xxx. the fleeting cloud, that is the fit image of my past prosperity.

ver. 16. *My very soul is poured out within me.* Days of affliction are

ver. 17, 18. followed by nights of gnawing¹ torture. My mantle clings

ver. 19. to my emaciated frame; *in the mire where He has cast me* I lie, like the refuse that is round me.'

And then he turns for a moment to address, to apostrophise, to adjure HIM who is answerable for all these sufferings.

ver. 20. 'I cry to Thee,' he says, 'and no answer comes. I stand before Thee; and with stern, fixed, unalterable eye Thou regardest thine ancient friend:

ver. 21. *Thou art turned to be cruel to me!*

Thou, who didst once load me with Thy blessings, Thou
ver. 22. tossest me on high,' he cries wildly, 'as a sport to the fierce tornado of calamity; even now Thou art destroying me in this cruel storm. Back to the dust, I know it well, back to the dust of death, art Thou, my Creator, bringing me; hurrying me to the bourne whither all travel, whence none return:

ver. 23. *To the house appointed for all living.*

Yet surely,' he seems to say in a couplet of extreme obscurity, 'even in falling, even as I sink for ever, I may throw out my hand; even in the hour of ruin, I may raise a cry. For,'

ver. 24. (Margin). *Did not I weep, in happier days, for him that was in trouble?*

ver. 25. *Was not my soul grieved for the needy?*

'And is all sympathy gone from God and man?—sore is my need of it. In the hour of my confidence, came my ruin'

¹ 'They that gnaw.' The words were perhaps the foundation of a revolting yet touching tradition, that the worms, bred in Job's leprous ulcers (a sense accepted by Gregory), made him unapproachable to all but his wife who lovingly tended him. Delitzsch, in loco.

When I looked for good, then evil came :

And when I waited for light, there came darkness.'

LECTURE

X.

'My heart'—so we speak of the seat of the emotions—'my heart is on fire within me. I need no mourning garments. Grief has parched and darkened me, as no sun's rays could have power to do. I cry aloud, even when, as now, men are gathered around me; I cry on this vile heap, even as the howling jackal and screeching ostrich, whose brother I have become. For a fever parches my skin, and burns within my bones. No wonder that I utter this doleful elegy!'

Chap. xxx.

ver. 26.

ver. 27, 28.

ver. 29.

ver. 30.

Therefore is my harp turned to mourning,

ver. 31.

And my pipe into the voice of them that weep.

I have gone carefully with you through every word of this sad contrast which Job has drawn between his present and his former lot. I have spared you none of its details. It seemed to me well that we should realise the full force of this, his final and parting utterance of intense and unutterable distress, of wild and uncontrollable misery.

And we are now near to his closing words. He gathers himself up, once more, after this pathetic cry. Folding, as it were, his mantle round him, like the dying Caesar, he speaks with an impressive calm and dignity of the life which had been blasted by the east wind of these heavy trials in which his friends read the just judgment of his God. And as he describes those earlier days, in which, to use his own words, *the Almighty was yet with him, and his children were about him*¹, he uses language that paints, and is obviously meant to paint, the ideal of a saintly life, as measured by the standard of that far-off age. Indeed we may say more than this. The chapter that we now open breathes, almost or quite through-

¹ xxix. 5.

LECTURE X. out, a spirit that belongs rather to the New than to the Old Covenant. It is a practical anticipation of much of the

Chap. xxx. teaching that was to come from Him Who 'sat down and taught' His disciples on the mountain. It is the picture of one *perfect and upright, who feared God, and eschewed evil.*

Chap. xxxi. He begins, in Chapter xxxi, with a glance at sins of
 ver. 1-3. unchastity. It was not on his acts only, but on his eyes and thoughts, that he had imposed a law, *with which he had made a covenant.* For in those days, he knew well, he tells us, that God had assigned his heaviest judgments as the sure inheritance of those who infringed that noble law of purity which lifts man above the brute; and he felt 'that He was about his path and about his bed,' *saw all his ways, and*
 ver. 5. *numbered all his steps.* 'The path too in which he had walked was that of uprightness; falsehood and hollow shams had never been his companions.' 'Let his life,' he says
 ver. 6. deliberately, *'be weighed in a just balance—*not judged by the insinuations or charges of his friends—that God may judge
 ver. 7. of his innocence. If he has left that path, and his eye hath misled his heart, some wandering desire carried with it his will, and found shape in act, and so soiled the hands which he now lifts up to God,'

ver. 8. *Then let me sow, and let another eat;*

I'ea, let the produce of my field be rooted out.

He is speaking, you see, as though swept back by the strong deep current of his feelings to his former position; not as the poor leper, destitute and despised upon his dunghill, but as the master of many herds and of broad lands, and the father of happy children.

ver. 9-12. And so again, the sin of adultery he repudiates—with a

sternly uttered imprecation—as a crime which even human judges would punish, punish not in one sex only, but in his own, and which would also call down a heavier penalty from God. LECTURE
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—♦—
Chap. xxxi.

And then, in ten striking couplets, full to the very brim of such a sense of the brotherhood of all mankind, as we may look for elsewhere in vain through the pages of the Old Testament, he speaks of his innocence of all abuse of the power which wealth and station had placed in his hands. 'Had those beneath him, his very servants, male or female, brought a complaint against him? When had he despised their cause? Had he done so, he should have felt condemned, when his own cause came before his God:' ver. 13-22.

ver. 13.

What then shall I do when God riseth up? ver. 14.

And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

Is it not the very spirit in which St. Paul, centuries later, bids the Christian masters of bondsmen held under the terrible tenure of the Roman slave law, remember '*that both their Master and yours is in Heaven, and that there is no respect of persons in His sight*'¹? Nay more; '*Did not,*' adds Job,

He that made me in the womb make him? ver. 15.

And did not one fashion us in the womb?

Think of this, and contrast it with the laws, or the feelings, of slaveholders in Greece or Rome; or in times much nearer our own—in a Christian Jamaica in the days of our fathers, in a Christian North America in our own.

And what has been his attitude towards the poor and unbefriended? 'Had he ever scorned their craving for relief, or let the widow's eyes fade and languish with undried tears? Had he ever eaten,' as he graphically puts it, 'his own daily' ver. 16.
ver. 17.

¹ Ephesians vi. 9.

LECTURE X.
 Chap. xxxi. bread alone, and banished the orphan from his table ?' I put his language in the form of indignant questions. In the original the *if*'s all point to an imprecation of God's judgment, had he done so.

ver. 18. 'Had he not rather been as a father to the orphan, and, far back as he could recall his earliest days, treated the widow

ver. 19. with the tenderness of a son? Had he left the poor to

ver. 20. shiver in nakedness, or had he not rather clothed him with the fleeces of his sheep? Had the sight of friends all around him on the seat of justice made him insolent to the un-

ver. 21. friended? Had he lifted his hand to strike the fatherless, in the sense that his victim would find no redress?'

ver. 22. *Then let my shoulder, he cries, fall from the shoulder blade, And mine arm be broken from the bone !*

ver. 23. 'For surely,' he goes on, 'I was one who feared God, who knew well what wrath I should have incurred—that for these things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience¹.' And then for a moment, he turns aside to two sins closely connected by St. Paul, covetousness

ver. 24, 25. and idolatry. 'Gold, he had never made his trust; wealth had never filled his heart with joy.' He had learnt thus early the lesson that he could not serve God and Mammon. 'No !

ver. 26. never had he put his trust in other powers than God. *The sun when it shined, the moon walking in brightness* through the lustrous skies of Asia, had never stolen his heart from the Lord of sun and moon alike; never drawn from him the primeval salutation of ancient heathendom to the powers of nature;'

ver. 27. *Never had my heart been secretly enticed,
 And my mouth kissed my hand.*

¹ Colossians iii. 6.

‘Well know I, that to do so, to fall back, like so many of my race, into the snare of polytheism, would have been a crime deserving judgment. I should have been false to the one God who created the heaven of heavens.’ And then he turns back once more to human duties; but even here he stands rather on the level of one whose heart had been touched by the spirit of the Christ who was to come, than of a mere child of the covenant made with Abraham. ‘*Never had he rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated him, never even asked his life in a secret prayer.*’ We feel that we are breathing the ‘difficult air’ of a lofty region, which many a Psalmist, many others of God’s children of old time, found too high to scale.

And once more he calls God to witness that he had ‘ministered to the necessities’ of his fellow creatures with an unstinting hand; that he had never seen his Maker’s image an-hungred, and refused him food. ‘The men of his tent, his household, knew well,’ he says, ‘their master’s mind. How can we find,’ they would say, ‘one who has not tasted of his flesh—of the smoking kid or fatted calf—that he has ready for the stranger? No traveller was left to lodge beneath the open sky; his door was never closed to him who needed shelter.’ It is a fully drawn picture of Arab hospitality. ‘Nor,’ he adds in answer to those who had charged him with cherishing some secret sin, ‘did I lead a solitary and moody life, hiding myself as Adam in the garden’ (or—for the interpretation is most doubtful—‘as men have done ere now’), ‘from the rebuke of men, behind the doors and curtains, that closed my abode;

*Because I feared the great multitude,
And the contempt of families terrified me,
So that I kept silence, and went not out of the door.*

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Chap. xxxi.

No, I lived in the sight of day, under the eyes of all.' And as his thoughts go back from these dark hours of worse than solitude to those earlier 'moons,' his wounded spirit bursts forth into its last loud and bitter cry:

ver. 35.

Oh that I had one to hear me!

'Here is my pleading! Here is my formal written statement of my innocence! Here my hand and seal!' We are once more, you see, carried forwards into the imagery of the written proceedings of the law court of some settled and long civilised nation. '*Here is my signature! Let the Almighty, let Him Who knows my life, and yet has laid this burden of sorrow on me, let him answer me.* Oh that I had the indictment, the schedule, which He, my adversary, had framed and filed against me'—banish for ever from your minds the misleading *book* of our older version—'so sure am I that it would urge no crime against me, no treason to my

ver. 36.

Master, that I would bear it'—that strip of parchment or that open scroll of papyrus—'as a badge of honour on my shoulder, yea, fix it on my brow, as a very diadem! How gladly would

ver. 37.

I declare unto Him the number of my steps; each step that I have taken in the path of life. *Yea, as a prince*, proudly and fearlessly, *would I go near unto Him*, to meet my judge, strong in the sense of innocence, bold with the courage of an unclouded conscience.'

You will see that such language, though it would be an anomaly, an impossibility on the lips of a Christian born into the teaching of the Spirit that has opened the eye of humanity to a deeper sense of personal sinfulness, is perfectly harmonious and natural on those of Job. For the whole meaning and burden of the Prologue, is the innocence, the freedom, i. e. from crime, which he pleads. And his

friends have forced him into the terrible dilemma, that either that God-fearing life was a dream and a lie, or that God is unrighteous. And so, after this supreme effort, this last uplifting of his wounded heart to God, he returns once more, before he ends, to the calmer review of his former life. 'If,' he says, '*my land cry against me* ; if it echo the complaint of some dispossessed and impoverished owner, whom I have supplanted ; *if the furrows thereof weep together*, if my ploughs are driven through a soil that still seems to bemoan the hard lot of some long established cultivator' —some village Naboth, driven by Job's hand from his ancestral home—'*if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money*, withheld payment to the vendor, or wages to the labourer ; if my violence or my fraud has robbed the owner of his life—then let thorns and brambles grow in those fields instead of wheat, and weeds spring up instead of barley. Cursed to me be the fields which I have won by removing my neighbour's landmark ! Cursed to me the lands which I have made my own by smiting my neighbour secretly¹.'

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Chap. xxxi.

ver. 38.

ver. 39.

ver. 40.

And suddenly, with these simple yet impassioned words, impressive in their very naked directness and simplicity, he ends.

We need not discuss the views of critics, who would rearrange the order of the chapter which we have just read, in order to furnish Job with a peroration more in accordance with the rules of a later rhetoric. You will be content, I think, to accept his closing words even as we find them.

And now he has done. *The words of Job*, we read, *are*

ver. 40.

¹ Commination Service.

LECTURE
X.
—♦—

ended. The dialogue with the three friends is over. *They* have long been silent. Again and again they have urged their view, that God is just; '*that He is a God of faithfulness, and there is no iniquity in Him*¹;' and therefore, that as He is the ruler of the world, the fate of Job must be in entire accordance with strict justice. They have also reminded him, that—while it is impossible for any human being to be innocent in the sight of Him,

*Who putteth no trust in his servants,
And his angels he chargeth with folly,*

*How much more them that dwell in houses of clay*²?—

yet that Job's unexampled sufferings must point to some exampled delinquency, which, however, may even yet be forgiven him. If only punishment will wean him from his sin, he may still be restored to God's greater favour. You will remember that this has been their main position, towards which they steadily advanced, and from which they have never receded for a single moment.

And you will not forget how often they have maintained their position very eloquently and very forcibly. They have been defending what they felt to be the priceless heritage of an hereditary faith. They have upheld it with much richness of thought and beauty of imagery. They have been deaf to the voice of Job's conscience, blind to their own knowledge of his former life, resolute against opening their minds to any new idea, firmly convinced that they had God's nature and God's dealings laid out as in a map before them. Yet narrow and inadequate as is their creed, fatal as its narrowness would have proved to the expansive and enlarging influence of God's progressive teaching, they have

¹ Deut. xxxii. 4.

² Job iv. 18, 19.

duly brought out its true and its noble side, and they have satisfied themselves that they are pleading throughout the cause of God, and the cause of true religion. They have felt no doubt at all on this point, and have retired silenced before what seemed to them their friend's impenitent, obdurate, and rebellious mood, but in no way convinced by him. It is impossible also to deny that the greater part of their language, all in fact that deals with the general question at issue, is in accordance with much that is to be found elsewhere in the Old Testament, and that they are put before us as the champions, not of some new and heretical teaching, but of the accepted, and if I may so speak, the orthodox creed of their day. Are they not bringing to bear upon the individual soul the very teaching which prophet after prophet had been divinely commissioned to impress upon the Hebrew nation—the very lessons which, as addressed to the community, God's messengers had laboured to work into the very life blood of their people? I have, therefore, not for a moment attempted to represent them to you, either as three heretical teachers, or even as some have done, as the types of three different schools of religion or philosophy. For with some slight touch of individuality, noticed as we met them, they seem to me to urge, and to be intended to urge, one and the same view. They stand before us, as representing not three distinct forms of thought—such as the Philosopher, the man of the world, and the Priest—but rather a compact, and united, and overwhelming majority of religious men, of one mind and one view on the question which is at stake. 'It is impossible,' they all assert—let me remind you once more—that under the government of a just God, the life of an innocent

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X.
—♦—

man can be other than happy and prosperous. There is no such thing in the world,' they are quite certain, 'as undeserved calamity, or unpunished wickedness.'

And it is against this view, in which he himself has been nursed and trained, that Job—the Job remember, who was set before us in the Prologue, as the friend and servant of God—has been forced to plead. His position has been cruel. That God does no wrong, that no injustice can be ascribed to Him, is a doctrine that must have been as dear to that lonely servant of God, as to those three friends. And yet he has found himself involved in the very destiny which both he and his friends are agreed in believing to be the portion of the wicked¹. Yet he knows that, making all allowance for human infirmity, his life has been both in act and thought pure and upright, that *the counsel of the wicked has in very truth been far from him*². And as we review his language, we see in it much that is the mere outcry of bodily pain and torture; but much also that naturally shocked, inevitably and justifiably startled and offended, his friends. The intensity of his misery, and the keenness of his perplexity, have wrung from him not only cries of pain, wild almost to delirium, but assertions, that while he himself is sorely wronged, the Almighty denies him justice, and even that his own unmerited sufferings are but a sample of a wider misrule. I need not do more than remind you of the many passages in which he has spoken of God as 'destroying good and wicked alike³;' as 'laughing at the trial of the innocent,' leaving the unrighteous to live and die in unbroken⁴ prosperity, condemning others, for no fault of their own, to live and die in hopeless

¹ xx. 20; xxvii. 13.² xxi. 16.³ ix. 22, 23.⁴ xxi. 7-26.

misery, and as closing man's short and random destiny by a death which leaves no hope of redress or change. Nowhere in the whole range of literature have such charges against the government or misgovernment of the world been urged in a more passionate or more unflinching indictment. It is no wonder that Christian commentators have refused to accept his words—verging on, to say the least, or if taken by themselves, passing the verge of actual impiety—in the sense, or any approach to the sense, in which they were plainly uttered; or that Jewish sages have more frankly written on them such comments as, 'here dust should have filled the mouth of Job,' 'here Job denied the resurrection of the dead,' 'here Job commences to blaspheme.'

Yet, running like a golden thread through all this vehement and passionate language, we have seen a vein of thought which has given this half rebellious questioner a claim upon our sympathy; and which even had the book ended here, would have prevented thoughtful men from joining his opponents, and from abandoning the solitary and tortured sufferer to the reproaches of his friends, and to the condemnation of the future readers of this great controversy. His soul, ripened by the hot blast of cruel affliction, is being prepared for a step, a long step forward, in that progressive revelation of Himself to man, given to us by God in Holy Scripture. He sickens at the sight and sense of wrong, and clinging to the conviction that, in spite of all appearances, God must be just—juster than his friends, or his own creed, or his own experience have declared Him to be—he struggles to be true at once to himself, to his conscience, and his God. He yearns for a clearer sight of, and a nearer approach to, the Divine

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X.
—♦♦—

Being against Whom, as seen in the insufficient light yet given him, he has launched so vehement an indictment, so terrible a flood of fervid and poetic wrath. And while he has no sure and certain hope of a life beyond the grave, such as was revealed to the world in Christ, yet his pathetic moans¹ at the finality of death give place, once to a dim aspiration, and once and again to a more loud assertion of his conviction—bursting forth like a flash of light from his darkest mood—that even if he is to die, die in his misery and desolation, God will yet be his God, his Vindicator; that somehow, he knows not how, he shall even after the shock of death have sight of God, and have his wrongs redressed; and therefore that he who has once been so dear to Him, and who has fallen so low in this life, will not be left to be ‘of all men the most miserable.’ And we have noticed, I need not say, for it will be fresh in your memories, how in his description of his early life, he moves in a serene and lofty atmosphere, puts before us a moral standard of practice and even of thought, which a Christian might be thankful to attain and realise. And now he and his friends alike are silent, silent but unconvinced. Neither the one side or the other have won the adhesion, even the modified adhesion, of those against whom they argue. They cannot point to any guilt on Job’s part. He cannot convince them of his innocence. Neither one side or the other have, we cannot but feel, laid their hands upon the whole truth. Yet each has exhausted his store of arguments, shot his arrows, and emptied his quiver. And deep as is the hold which Job has gained upon our interest and sympathy, yet ‘the light and shade has been so

¹ xiv. 13; xvi. 19; xix. 25.

graduated that those sympathies are not entirely confined to one side.'

LECTURE
X.

It would seem as though, at our next meeting, the time must needs have come when we shall hear the voice of the great Judge—when the final award and decision must needs be given.

February 27, 1886.

LECTURE XI. .

CHAPTERS XXXII—XXXVII.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. XXXII—XXXVII.)

- 32** So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was
² righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu
the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram : against
Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather
³ than God. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled,
because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.
⁴ Now Elihu had ¹ waited to speak unto Job, because they were ¹ Heb.
⁵ elder than he. And when Elihu saw that there was no answer *waited for*
in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was kindled. *Job with*
⁶ And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, *words.*
I am young, and ye are very old ;
Wherefore I held back, and durst not shew you mine opinion.
⁷ I said, Days should speak,
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.
⁸ But there is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.
⁹ It is not the great that are wise,
Nor the aged that understand judgement.
¹⁰ Therefore I ² said, Hearken to me ;
I also will shew mine opinion.
¹¹ Behold, I waited for your words,
I listened for your reasons,
Whilst ye searched out what to say.
¹² Yea, I attended unto you,
And, behold, there was none that convinced Job,
Or that answered his words, among you.
¹³ ³ Beware lest ye say, We have found wisdom ;

CHAPTER
XXXII.

*waited for
Job with
words.*

² Or, say

³ Or, *Lest
ye should
say, We
have found
out wis-
dom ; God
thrusteth
him down,
not man :
now he
S^c.*

CHAPTER	God may vanquish him, not man :	
XXXII.	For he hath not directed his words against me ;	14
—♦—	Neither will I answer him with your speeches.	
	They are amazed, they answer no more :	15
	They have not a word to say.	
	And shall I wait, because they speak not,	16
	Because they stand still, and answer no more ?	
	I also will answer my part,	17
	I also will shew mine opinion.	
	For I am full of words ;	18
¹ Heb. of my belly.	The spirit ¹ within me constraineth me.	
	Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent ;	19
² Or, wine- skins	Like new ² bottles ³ it is ready to burst.	
³ Or, which are ready	I will speak, that I may ⁴ be refreshed ;	20
	I will open my lips and answer.	
	Let me not, I pray you, respect any man's person ;	21
⁴ Or, find relief	Neither will I give flattering titles unto any man.	
	For I know not to give flattering titles ;	22
	<i>Else</i> would my Maker soon take me away.	
	Howbeit, Job, I pray thee, hear my speech,	33
	And hearken to all my words.	
	Behold now, I have opened my mouth,	2
⁵ Heb. palate.	My tongue hath spoken in my ⁵ mouth.	
	My words <i>shall utter</i> the uprightness of my heart :	3
	And that which my lips know they shall speak sincerely.	
	The spirit of God hath made me,	4
	And the breath of the Almighty giveth me life.	
	If thou canst, answer thou me ;	5
	Set <i>thy words</i> in order before me, stand forth.	
⁶ Or, I am according to thy wish in God's stead	Behold, ⁶ I am toward God even as thou art :	6
	I also am formed out of the clay.	
	Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid,	7
	Neither shall my pressure be heavy upon thee.	
	Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing,	8
	And I have heard the voice of <i>thy words</i> , <i>saying</i> ,	
	I am clean, without transgression ;	9
	I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me :	

- 10 Behold, he findeth ¹ occasions against me,
He counteth me for his enemy ;
- 11 He putteth my feet in the stocks,
He marketh all my paths.
- 12 ² Behold, I will answer thee, in this thou art not just ;
For God is greater than man.
- 13 ³ Why dost thou strive against him ?
For he giveth not account of any of his matters.
- 14 For God speaketh ⁴ once,
Yea twice, *though man* regardeth it not.
- 15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men,
In slumberings upon the bed ;
- 16 Then he ⁵ openeth the ears of men,
And sealeth their instruction,
- 17 ⁶ That he may withdraw man *from his* purpose,
And hide pride from man ;
- 18 ⁷ He keepeth back his soul from the pit,
And his life from perishing by the ⁸ sword.
- 19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
⁹ And with continual strife in his bones :
- 20 So that his life abhorreth bread,
And his soul dainty meat.
- 21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen ;
And his bones that were not seen stick out.
- 22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit,
And his life to the destroyers.
- 23 If there be with him ¹⁰ an angel,
An interpreter, one ¹¹ among a thousand,
To shew unto man ¹² what is right for him ;
- 24 ¹³ Then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
Deliver him from going down to the pit,
I have found a ransom.
- 25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's ;
He returneth to the days of his youth :
- 26 He prayeth unto God, and he is favourable unto him ;
So that he seeth his face with joy :

uprightness ¹³ Or, *And he be gracious . . . and say . . . ransom : his flesh &c.*

CHAPTER
XXXIII.

¹ Or, *causes of alienation*

² Or,
Behold, in this thou art not just ; I will answer thee : for &c.

³ Or, *Why dost thou strive against him, for that he . . . matters ?*

⁴ Or, *in one way, yea, in two*

⁵ Heb. *uncovereth.*

⁶ Or, *That man may put away his purpose, and that he may hide*

⁷ Or, *That he may keep back*

⁸ Or, *weapons*
⁹ Another reading is, *While all his bones are firm.*

¹⁰ Or, *a messenger*

¹¹ Or, *of the thousand*

¹² Or, *his*

CHAPTER XXXIII.	And he restoreth unto man his righteousness.	
	¹ He singeth before men, and saith,	27
—♦—	I have sinned, and perverted that which was right,	
¹ Or, <i>He looketh upon men</i>	And ² it profited me not :	
	He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit,	28
² Or, <i>it was not requited unto me</i>	And my life shall behold the light.	
	Lo, all these things doth God work,	29
<i>Or, it was not meet for me</i>	Twice, <i>yea</i> thrice, with a man,	
	To bring back his soul from the pit,	30
	That he may be enlightened with the light of ³ the living.	
	Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me :	31
³ Or, <i>life</i>	Hold thy peace, and I will speak.	
	If thou hast any thing to say, answer me :	32
	Speak, for I desire to justify thee.	
	If not, hearken thou unto me :	33
	Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.	
	Moreover Elihu answered and said,	34
	Hear my words, ye wise men ;	2
	And give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.	
	For the ear trieth words,	3
	As the palate tasteth meat.	
	Let us choose for us that which is right :	4
	Let us know among ourselves what is good.	
	For Job hath said, I am righteous,	5
	And God hath taken away my right :	
⁴ Or, <i>Should I lie against my right ?</i>	⁴ Notwithstanding my right I am <i>accounted</i> a liar ;	6
	⁵ My wound is incurable, <i>though I am</i> without transgression.	
⁵ Heb. <i>Mine arrow.</i>	What man is like Job,	7
	Who drinketh up scorning like water ?	
	Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity,	8
	And walketh with wicked men.	
	For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing	9
⁶ Or, <i>consent with See Ps. l. 18.</i>	That he should ⁶ delight himself with God.	
	Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding :	10
	Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness ;	
	And from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.	
	For the work of a man shall he render unto him,	11

CHAPTER
XXXIV.

And cause every man to find according to his ways.

12 Yea, of a surety, God will not do wickedly,
Neither will the Almighty pervert judgement.

13 Who gave him a charge over the earth?
Or who hath ¹disposed the whole world?

14 ²If he set his heart ³upon ⁴man
If he gather upon himself his spirit and his breath;

15 All flesh shall perish together,
And man shall turn again unto dust.

16 ⁵If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this :
Hearken to the voice of my words.

17 Shall even one that hateth right govern?
And wilt thou condemn him that is just *and* mighty?

18 ⁶Is it *fit* to say to a king, *Thou art* vile?
Or to nobles, *Ye are* wicked?

19 *How much less* to him that respecteth not the persons of
princes,

Nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?
For they all are the work of his hands.

20 In a moment they die, ⁷even at midnight;
The people are shaken and pass away,
And the mighty are taken away without hand.

21 For his eyes are upon the ways of a man,
And he seeth all his goings.

22 There is no darkness, nor shadow of death,
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

23 For he needeth not further to consider a man,
That he should go before God in judgement.

24 He breaketh in pieces mighty men ⁸*in ways* past finding out,
And setteth others in their stead.

25 Therefore he taketh knowledge of their works;
And he overturneth them in the night, so that they are
⁹destroyed.

26 He striketh them as wicked men

¹⁰In the open sight of others;

27 Because they turned aside from following him,
And would not have regard to any of his ways :

¹ Or, *laid*
upon him

² Accord-
ing to
another
reading, *If*
he cause
his heart
to return
unto
himself.

³ Or, *upon*
himself

⁴ Heb. *him*

⁵ Or, *Only*
understand

⁶ Or, as
read by
some
ancient
versions,
Who saith
to . . . vile,
and to . . .
wicked ;
that re-
specteth
&c.

⁷ Or, *and*
at mid-
night the
people &c.

⁸ Or,
without
inquisition

⁹ Heb.
crushed.

¹⁰ Heb. *In*
the place
of beholders

CHAPTER XXXIV.	¹ So that they caused the cry of the poor to come unto him,	28
	And he heard the cry of the afflicted.	
—♦—	When he giveth quietness, who then can condemn?	29
¹ Or, <i>That they might cause . . . and that he might hear</i>	And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?	
	Whether <i>it be done</i> unto a nation, or unto a man, alike :	
	That the godless man reign not,	30
	That there be none to ensnare the people.	
	For hath any said unto God,	31
² Or, <i>though I offend not</i>	I have borne <i>chastisement</i> , ² I will not offend <i>any more</i> :	
	That which I see not teach thou me :	32
	If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more?	
	Shall his recompence be as thou wilt, that thou refusest it?	33
	For thou must choose, and not I :	
	Therefore speak what thou knowest.	
	Men of understanding will say unto me,	34
	Yea, every wise man that heareth me :	
	Job speaketh without knowledge,	35
	And his words are without wisdom.	
	Would that Job were tried unto the end,	36
	Because of his answering like wicked men.	
	For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,	37
	He clappeth his hands among us,	
	And multiplieth his words against God.	
	Moreover Elihu answered and said,	35
	Thinkest thou this to be <i>thy</i> right,	2
	<i>Or</i> sayest thou, My righteousness is more than God's,	
	That thou sayest, What advantage will it be unto thee?	3
	<i>And</i> , What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?	
	I will answer thee,	4
	And thy companions with thee.	
	Look unto the heavens, and see ;	5
	And behold the skies, which are higher than thou.	
	If thou hast sinned, what doest thou against him?	6
	And if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?	
	If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?	7
	Or what receiveth he of thine hand?	

- 8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art ;
And thy righteousness *may profit* a son of man.
- 9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they cry out ;
They cry for help by reason of the arm of the mighty.
- 10 But none saith, Where is God my Maker,
Who giveth songs in the night ;
- 11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth,
And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven ?
- 12 There they cry, ¹but none giveth answer,
Because of the pride of evil men.
- 13 Surely God will not hear vanity,
Neither will the Almighty regard it.
- 14 How much less when thou sayest ²thou beholdest him not,
The cause is before him, and thou waitest for him !
- 15 But now, because he hath not visited in his anger,
³Neither doth he greatly regard arrogance ;
- 16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vanity ;
He multiplieth words without knowledge.
- 36 Elihu also proceeded, and said,
² ⁴Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee ;
For ⁵I have yet somewhat to say on God's behalf.
- 3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
- 4 For truly my words are not false :
One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.
- 5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any :
He is mighty in strength of ⁶understanding.
- 6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked :
But giveth to the afflicted *their* right.
- 7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous :
But with kings upon the throne
He setteth them for ever, and they are exalted.
- 8 And if they be bound in fetters,
And be taken in the cords of affliction ;
- 9 Then he sheweth them their work,
And their transgressions, that they have behaved themselves
proudly.

¹ Or, *but*
he answer-
eth not

² Or, *thou*
beholdest
him not !
The cause
is before
him ;
therefore
wait thou
for him.

³ Or, Thou
sayest,
He doth
not greatly
regard ar-
rogance.
Thus doth
&c.

⁴ Heb.
Wait for.

⁵ Heb.
there are
yet words
for God.

⁶ Heb.
heart.

CHAPTER XXXVI.	He openeth also their ear to instruction,	10
—♦♦—	And commandeth that they return from iniquity.	
	If they hearken and serve <i>him</i> ,	11
	They shall spend their days in prosperity,	
¹ Or,	And their years in ¹ pleasures.	
<i>pleasant-</i>	But if they hearken not, they shall perish by ² the sword,	12
<i>ness</i>	And they shall die without knowledge.	
² Or,	But they that are godless in heart lay up anger:	13
<i>weapons</i>	They cry not for help when he bindeth them.	
³ Heb.	³ They die in youth,	14
<i>Their</i>	And their life <i>perisheth</i> ⁴ among the ⁵ unclean.	
<i>soul dieth.</i>	He delivereth the afflicted ⁶ by his affliction,	15
⁴ Or, <i>like</i>	And openeth their ear ⁷ in oppression.	
⁵ Or,	Yea, he would have ⁸ led thee away ⁹ out of distress	16
<i>sodomites</i>	Into a broad place, where there is no straitness;	
See Deut.	And that which is set on thy table should be full of fatness.	
xxiii. 17.	But thou ¹⁰ art full of the judgement of the wicked:	17
⁶ Or, <i>in</i>	Judgement and justice take hold <i>on thee</i> .	
⁷ Or, <i>by</i>	¹¹ Because there is wrath, beware lest thou be ¹² led away by	18
<i>adversity</i>	<i>thy</i> sufficiency;	
⁸ Or,	Neither let the greatness of the ransom turn thee aside.	
<i>allured</i>	¹³ Will thy riches suffice, ¹⁴ <i>that thou be</i> not in distress,	19
<i>thee</i>	Or all the forces of <i>thy</i> strength?	
⁹ Heb. <i>out</i>	Desire not the night,	20
<i>of the</i>	When peoples ¹⁵ are cut off in their place.	
<i>mouth of.</i>	Take heed, regard not iniquity:	21
¹⁰ Or, <i>hast</i>	For this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.	
<i>filled up</i>	Behold, God doeth loftily in his power:	22
¹¹ Or, <i>For</i>	Who is a teacher like unto him?	
<i>beware lest</i>	Who hath enjoined him his way?	23
<i>wrath lead</i>	Or who can say, Thou hast wrought unrighteousness?	
<i>thee away</i>	Remember that thou magnify his work,	24
<i>into</i>	Whereof men hath sung.	
<i>mockery</i>	All men have looked thereon;	25
¹² Or,	Man beholdeth it afar off.	
<i>allured</i>	Behold, God is great, and we know him not;	26
¹³ Or, <i>Will</i>	The number of his years is unsearchable.	
<i>thy cry</i>		
<i>avail</i>		
¹⁴ Or, <i>that</i>		
<i>are without</i>		
<i>stint</i>		
¹⁵ Heb.		
<i>go up.</i>		

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- 27 For he draweth up the drops of water
Which distil in rain ¹from ²his vapour :
- 28 Which the skies pour down
And drop upon man abundantly.
- 29 Yea, can any understand the spreadings of the clouds,
The thunderings of his pavilion ?
- 30 Behold, he spreadeth his light ³around him ;
And he ⁴covereth the bottom of the sea.
- 31 For by these he judgeth the peoples ;
He giveth meat in abundance.
- 32 He covereth his hands with the ⁵lightning ;
And giveth it a charge ⁶that it strike the mark.
- 33 The noise thereof telleth concerning ⁷him,
The cattle also concerning ⁸the storm that cometh up.
- 37** At this also my heart trembleth,
And is moved out of its place.
- 2 Hearken ye unto the noise of his voice,
And the ⁹sound that goeth out of his mouth.
- 3 He sendeth it forth under the whole heaven,
And his ¹⁰lightning unto the ¹¹ends of the earth.
- 4 After it a voice roareth ;
He thundereth with the voice of his majesty :
And he stayeth them not when his voice is heard.
- 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice ;
Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.
- 6 For he saith to the snow, Fall thou on the earth ;
Likewise to the shower of rain,
And to the showers of his mighty rain.
- 7 He sealeth up the hand of every man ;
That all men whom he hath made may know *it*.
- 8 Then the beasts go into coverts,
And remain in their dens.
- 9 Out of ¹²the chamber *of the south* cometh the storm :
And cold out of the ¹³north.
- 10 By the breath of God ice is given :
And the breadth of the waters is ¹⁴straitened.
- 11 Yea, he ladeth the thick cloud with moisture ;

¹ Heb.
belonging
to.

² Or, *the*
vapour
thereof

³ Or,
thereon

⁴ Or,
covereth it
with the
depths of
the sea

⁵ Heb.
light.

⁶ Or,
against the
assailant

⁷ Or, *it*

⁸ Or, *him*

⁹ Or,
muttering

¹⁰ Heb.
light.

¹¹ Heb.
skirts.

¹² See ch.
ix. 9.

¹³ Heb.
scattering
winds.

¹⁴ Or,
congealed

CHAPTER XXXVII.	He spreadeth abroad the cloud of his ¹ lightning :	
—♦♦—	And it is turned round about by his guidance,	12
¹ Heb. <i>light.</i>	That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them	
² Or, <i>earth</i>	Upon the face of the habitable world :	
³ Or, <i>Thou</i>	Whether it be for correction, or for his ² land	13
<i>whose</i>	Or for mercy, that he cause it to come.	
<i>garments</i>	Hearken unto this, O Job :	14
<i>are &c.</i>	Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.	
⁴ Or, <i>When</i>	Dost thou know how God layeth <i>his charge</i> upon them,	15
<i>he quieteth</i>	And causeth the ¹ lightning of his cloud to shine?	
<i>the earth</i>	Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds,	16
<i>by the</i>	The wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?	
<i>south wind</i>	⁵ How thy garments are warm,	17
⁵ Or, <i>If a</i>	⁴ When the earth is still by reason of the south <i>wind</i> ?	
<i>man speak,</i>	Canst thou with him spread out the sky,	18
<i>surely he</i>	Which is strong as a molten mirror?	
<i>shall be</i>	Teach us what we shall say unto him ;	19
<i>swallowed</i>	<i>For</i> we cannot order <i>our speech</i> by reason of darkness.	
<i>up.</i>	Shall it be told him that I would speak?	20
⁶ Or,	⁵ Or should a man wish that he were swallowed up?	
<i>cannot look</i>	And now men ⁶ see not the light which is bright in the skies :	21
<i>on the light</i>	But the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.	
<i>when it is</i>	Out of the north cometh ⁷ golden splendour :	22
<i>bright in</i>	God hath upon him terrible majesty.	
<i>the skies,</i>	<i>Touching</i> the Almighty, we cannot find him out ; he is ex-	23
<i>when the</i>	cellent in power :	
<i>wind hath</i>	And ⁸ in judgement and plenteous justice he will not afflict.	
<i>passed, and</i>	Men do therefore fear him :	24
<i>cleansed</i>	He regardeth not any that are wise of heart.	
<i>them</i>		
⁷ Heb. <i>gold.</i>		
⁸ Or,		
<i>judgement</i>		
<i>... he</i>		
<i>doeth no</i>		
<i>violence</i>		

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CHAPTERS XXXII—XXXVII.

Elihu.

WE seemed, you will remember, at the close of the last chapter that we read together, to be on the very verge of the final scene of this great book. The catastrophe of the drama, of which we had so long been spectators, seemed close at hand. We had watched on the part of Job the spiritual and mental agony, the searching conflict, the alternations of submission and revolt, of despair and hope, which take the place of human action in the progress of that drama. We had listened to the reiterated utterances of his friends, as they upheld in turn their united view of the secret of his sufferings, and at last returned to the silence which they have so vainly broken. And as we had been witnesses of their mute appeal from their friend, their rebellious and presumptuous friend, as they esteemed him, to Him of whose undeviating righteousness they had felt and avowed themselves to be the champions, so we had listened to Job's last deliberate and solemn assertion of his innocence. We heard his appeal, his final and pathetic appeal, from the judgment of man to the tribunal of his God. The crisis, we might well believe, must surely be at hand. But at this moment, at the very place where we open the book to-day, there comes an unlooked for pause. Indeed, it is something more than a pause. It takes the shape of a prolonged argument, coming from a fresh and a wholly unexpected quarter ; and it carries us back, as by a strong counter current, meeting us at the last moment of our course, into the very heart of

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a controversy, which seemed by this time to have been left behind us. We have to turn over no less than six whole chapters before the short clause, *the words of Job are ended*, is replied to, by that which seems its natural and immediate response, *then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind*. I must, therefore, put before you to-day, as fairly and shortly as I can, the nature of this long interruption, this unaccountable break, as it seems, in the progress of the narrative. And I must not attempt to conceal from you the perplexity which it has caused to many of the wisest and most thoughtful students of the book.

ver. 1.

And, first of all, you will notice that the commencement of these six intervening chapters is marked—as you will see by a glance back at our new version—by the insertion of the longest passage of prose which we have met since we closed the second Chapter. It extends over the first five verses of Chapter xxxii. It tells us how the three friends remained silent, shocked at Job's assertion of his innocence. After all that we have read, this hardly needs further explanation; yet it may be well to state the case once more. Job's innocence, innocence as opposed to the guilt which they imputed to him, is of course the pivot on which the whole idea of the book turns. It is the one theme, the one motive, so to speak, of the first two chapters. But to deny this innocence is essential to the argument of his friends. For if Job is what he claims to be, one article of their creed, and one held by them to be absolutely essential to their faith, viz. that this visible order of things here below is administered throughout by the rules of divine and absolute justice, falls to pieces. Room must be found for the discomfiting and unsettling confession, that there is place in a world wholly ruled by a righteous God for

unmerited suffering, and for undeserved prosperity. But at this moment, when both sides have exhausted their pleadings, and are waiting for the verdict of Him in whose hands they have each placed those pleadings, a fresh speaker is brought on the stage. He is introduced with an unusually full description.

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ELIHU, he is called. The name is Hebrew, and its signification, *My-God-is-He*, is as clear in Hebrew as that of some names of analogous meaning in our own language, that for a time found place among English and Scottish homes, and were not quite unknown in the last days of the ancient Monastery of Westminster¹. From the genealogy which is carefully given he appears to be placed before us as descended from Nahor, a brother of Abraham²; to be, like the other personages of the story, of a patriarchal, but not a Jewish, race, no son of Israel, yet no heathen.

He is represented, you will see, as a bystander; younger than any of those who have as yet spoken. He had listened with more than disapproval, we are told, and he tells us himself, to the words alike of the three and of Job. He was indignant with Job, because he asserted his own innocence at the expense of God's justice, *because he justified himself rather than God*. He was indignant with his friends, because, though they condemned Job, they found no sufficient answer to his words.

ver. 2-5.

But he had listened with the reverential deference to age, so universal in oriental countries, till at last, when both parties had ceased to speak, he could restrain himself no longer; and he comes forward, beginning what he has to say with a laboured, yet not uninteresting apology.

¹ Among the surnames of the Monks who subscribed the Act of Surrender in January, 1540, are those of *Charity, Faith, Godhops, and Godluck*.

² See Gen. xxii. 21, 22, with Jeremiah xxv. 23.

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 ver. 7, 8.
 ver. 13.

Length of days, he says, *should bring wisdom*: 'but after all it is the *breath*, or *spirit*, or *inspiration* of God that gives both life and wisdom, and God may speak through the lips of the young, even as of the old.' And then, warning the friends that their attitude of disconcerted silence, at which he points his finger in the 15th verse, seems to mean that none but God can answer what Job has said; he feels bound, he says, to play his part; not bound only, but constrained. He 'feels within his breast'—I venture to translate his eastern imagery into metaphors more in accordance with western and modern sentiment—

'A power that will not be repressed,
 It prompts his voice, it swells his veins,
 It burns, it maddens, it constrains'¹.

He must needs, therefore, come forward, dismissing the awe inspired by the age and rank of the three Chiefs, and of him who was so lately the greatest of them all. He must speak the truth that burns within him, *with no respect*, as he says, for *any man's person, with no flattering titles*. 'Woe is unto him' if he do not.

It is a very long and somewhat laboured exordium. But in spite of an eastern metaphor in the 19th verse that jars upon modern ears, it is not without a force and dignity of its own, not wholly unworthy, it seems to myself, of the rest of the book.

Why then is it, we may at once ask, that this episode of Elihu has caused such difficulty, such perplexity, I might almost say such consternation, to critics and commentators? Why is it that the majority of the most thoughtful among them incline to believe that these six chapters were not part of the original book, but were added, either by the author

¹ Lord of the Isles. Canto II.

himself, or soon after by one of the same school of thought, or by some later hand?

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There is first the intrusion, so to speak, of this long interlude, this disturbing element, in the very crisis of the book. It is against, critics tell us with one voice, all the rules of art. It is quite true that in more than one masterpiece of Greek tragic poetry, there is introduced on the very eve of the crash of some appalling catastrophe, a light and almost frolicsome chorus¹, as though with the view of relieving the strain and tension of the feelings of those who have followed the progress of the plot. But I need not say that there is no analogy to this, either in the long address of Elihu, or in what follows. It is also true, and far more to the purpose, that the objection might be met by saying that, if once we begin to try and remodel the Old Testament according to the rules of Greek art or modern criticism, we shall rewrite, not the Book of Job only, but much of that great and sacred literature, that divine library, to use again Jerome's words, which we call the Bible. And we shall do this with very unsatisfactory results. We might as well complain that the Temple of Solomon could not have had a just claim on the affections of the Jews, and the memory of mankind, because it was so wholly unlike the Parthenon of Athens, or the edifice in which we meet.

But the objection becomes, doubtless, more formidable, when stated in another form. After this long and detailed introduction on the part of the author, and this long, and as some call it, pretentious exordium on his own part, the speaker's words seem to count for nothing. When Jehovah pronounces his verdict, Eliphaz is mentioned by name with

¹ See those beginning at l. 1086 of the *Oedipus Rex*, or at l. 1115 of the *Antigone*.

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his two friends. Job receives his sentence. *The Lord*, we shall read, *accepted Job*. But there is not one word of him who had appeared as the young, the ardent, the inspired and final champion of God's cause. The others 'have their reward;' he is simply unnoticed, is passed over in entire and absolute silence. Was this conceivable, if his long discourse had formed part, and so large and important a part, of the original work? It is to be remembered too, that the language in which he condemns Job is extremely strong, and that if he blames the friends, yet that he places himself wholly on their side; yet they are condemned, he not even named. To this it has been added by some, not, I think, conclusively, that he only repeats their arguments; that he contributes nothing to the real progress of the drama; while his style, and this must be admitted, differs from theirs, and from the rest of the book in being more involved and more obscure, only rising towards the close to the level of that of the other speakers; and that even there, it is merely an anticipation of the words of Jehovah that are yet to come.

I have not shrunk from putting these arguments plainly before you. No educated person in the present generation can read the Book of Job without having to take them into consideration. They stand on quite a different level from the theories of critics who would reject chapter after chapter till they had reduced this great work to a mere unintelligible and formless torso, on which we are to suppose various authors to have built up by degrees the great and noble poem which we are studying. Such theories have had in turn their day, and have passed, or are rapidly passing into oblivion. But the position and significance of the next six chapters are wholly different and far more perplexing.

Nor is the difficulty diminished, if, instead of carefully weighing for ourselves the words of Elihu, we consult different authorities for their opinion as to the intrinsic merits of the thoughts advanced by him. The candid inquirer will find a perfect chaos of opinion among both the fathers of the Church and later critics. If Saint Augustine speaks of his language being 'as wise as it was modest,' to Gregory the Great he seemed the type of foolish and arrogant teachers within the Church, even as the friends represented the heretical teachers outside her limits. Our own Bede saw in him the representative of the foes of the Church of Christ, and even echoes an extraordinary Talmudic tradition, which identified him with Balaam. Others have gone further, and seen in poor Elihu nothing less than Satan himself, reappearing in disguise. All these views are based on the supposition, taken for granted by many readers, not I think shared by you and me, that every word uttered by Job must somehow be right and true, and that everyone who opposed him must needs be wholly in the wrong.

On the other hand, one of the greatest of Jewish mediæval writers¹ speaks 'of his profound and wonderful discourse;' while in the eighteenth century Warburton saw in him one who was put forward as the type of the Old Testament prophets; and later on, a commentator², widely read in the last generation, says, 'it is evident that he was a young man of singular modesty and wisdom,' and looks on him as representing the deliberate views of the author of the whole book, as distinct from those of the different interlocutors. Nor indeed has there been any lack of writers who have held that under the mask of Elihu the author has concealed his

¹ Maimonides.

² Thomas Scott.

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own person¹ and views, and has come forward to modify the dramatic and bewildering boldness with which Job has put forward his denial of any inseparable connexion between crime and suffering, and to suggest some hints of the true solution of the cruel problems of life. Others adopt a somewhat similar view, and deaf to those who in recent times have spoken of this new personage as a 'mere wordspinner²,' 'a babbling stream to be passed by without notice, as he was in Jehovah's verdict,' believe that some pious Hebrew, feeling that neither Job nor his friends had laid their hands on the true secret of heaven-sent suffering, introduced these chapters as a contribution towards a higher teaching on the subject. Such readers have recognised in his discourse much that is most pure and true, more profoundly conceived and more strikingly presented, they have ventured to say, than by the three, even if no single wholly new thought is to be found within its compass³.

In presence of such unbounded discrepancy of views, of which I have given you only a few instances, I must speak with diffidence. I cannot, I confess, account for the silence with which this long address will be dismissed in the award of Jehovah. Why do Job and his friends receive their meed of praise or blame, he neither? Why is the last speaker of all dismissed, after a speech of extraordinary length, absolutely unnoticed? Yet at the same time, I cannot but think, that stammering and confused⁴ at times, as may be the accents of one who is evidently introduced as

¹ Among others, Lightfoot and Rosenmüller.

² Herder and many others, with whom Mr. Froude in his interesting essay entirely agrees.

³ This view is taken among others by Ewald.

⁴ See Dean Stanley's Sermons, etc., in America, Sermon III, *The Perplexities of Life*.

representing the feelings of a younger group among those who surrounded Job, that they have yet a real claim on our attention and respect. I believe that we may gather from his words some grains of fresh views, not yet advanced by Job's friends. Whether those words formed, or did not form, a part of the first shape given to the original work, I dare not reject them as a far later and worthless addition. Nor is this all. There is something alike interesting and instructive in the very manner in which this fresh speaker comes forward. *I am young*, he says, *and ye are very old*, yet for all that, as he listened, *his anger was kindled*, not only *against Job*, but *against his three friends*; and in his attempt to mediate between them, and in the language in which he speaks of the aged being not always wise in judgment, he may be to us a type of epochs in which a younger generation has been more open to new ideas, less resolutely set against new forms of truth, and more fit to act as a means of transition from one stage of religious knowledge and spiritual light to another, than that which preceded it¹.

A very short summary of at least the leading portions of the words of the young speaker, will, I think, be enough to convince you that they certainly contain no Satanic poison, but rather the germ of ideas which have been largely developed under Christian teaching. We may recognise these thoughts, struggling, as it were, for utterance in an age which was as yet not enabled by God's spirit to formulate, or even receive them: an age certainly separated by no great interval of time, or dissimilarity of sentiment, from that to which the rest of the book must be assigned.

¹ The reader will find an interesting page on the subject in the sermon quoted on the preceding page.

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When Elihu has completed his exordium, which runs into the opening verses of a second chapter, he proceeds in Chapter xxxiii. to challenge the attention of Job, whom, unlike the other speakers, he addresses by name, and some of whose former language, he carefully, and not on the whole unfairly, epitomises.

- ver. 8-11. 'You have spoken,' he says, 'of your own entire innocence, of God as your enemy;' and he seems also to have in mind Job's complaints that God will not answer his cries, but leaves him alone in misery and bewilderment. 'Not so,'
- ver. 12, 13. replies Elihu, 'though God is greater than man, and you have no right to challenge him as an equal, yet He does
- ver. 14. reveal Himself from time to time in various ways. Some-
- ver. 15. times He gives men strange warnings in the silence of night, in the hours,

When deep sleep falleth upon men

In slumberings upon the bed.

- He wakes up the sleeping conscience by startling dreams.' We, as we read, may carry on our thoughts through many tales of many ages, to such lives in our own land as those of Colonel Gardiner or John Newton. 'Sometimes,' he
- ver. 19-24. continues, 'He sends His warnings in the form of a chastening sickness; and some spiritual influence,' embodied by the speaker in a heavenly or angelic messenger, 'reveals to the sick man, in and through his very pain and weariness, the
- ver. 24-30. right path which he has long neglected. *The ransom* of his penitence is accepted; health comes back to body and
- ver. 25. soul; the leper's flesh "comes again like unto the flesh of a little child¹," and he reconciles himself to God, and pours forth his thanks, in a Psalm of repentance and thankfulness.'

¹ 2 Kings v. 14.

There is nothing surely here, in this picture so true to life, which is unworthy of the teaching of the book, or of the prompting of God's Spirit, nothing arrogant, windy, or heretical. May we not rather say that Elihu is darkly intimating what so many souls have fully realised in Christ, that times of mortal sickness, or pain, or bereavement, are those which God sometimes chooses for pouring into the human heart new views of truth, and fresh streams of spiritual yet substantial joys? May we not hear a voice 'stammering,' it may be, and half articulate, hinting that 'of which the Cross of Christ is to us the surest of pledges, that the deepest suffering may be the condition of the highest blessing: the sign not of God's displeasure, but of his most compassionate love¹?' ver. 31-33.

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But to return. After a call to Job to answer, if he can, and an assertion that, if it were possible, the speaker would fain acquit him, he once more, in Chapter xxxiv, after a fresh but short exordium, quotes or summarises Job's former language. He recalls Job's loud assertions of his own innocence and of God's injustice, and he does this with a cry of protest. Job has pictured himself as lying wounded, mortally wounded, by the stroke of God, though guiltless. Elihu hardly misrepresents the poor patriarch, who, remember, could lay his pains on no hostile power of evil, and who was ignorant of that scene in heaven which was the key to all his bitter sufferings. 'Horrible!' cries Elihu. And then, in language even stronger than that of his elders, the youthful speaker attacks Job, not for some concealed guilt in his past life—of this, unlike his three elders, the youthful speaker says nothing—but as uttering blasphemy with delight, as *drinking up scorning*, as one athirst beneath an Eastern sun drinks *water*. ver. 5, 6.

Chapter
xxxiv.

ver. 7.

¹ A. P. Stanley, *ibid*.

LECTURE and by so doing throwing himself on the side of the wicked.
 XI. He adds that Job had laid down the principle that man was
 Chapter no gainer by God's friendship. And no doubt, one or two of
 xxxiv. his passionate cries had been, or seemed, almost, or quite, the
 ver. 8-13. equivalent¹ of this. 'This,' he says, 'is inconceivable. The
 great and all-powerful Author and Giver of life, no Viceroy
 of another power, but the Lord of all, cannot in the nature of
 ver. 14, 15. things be malevolent or inequitable. He has but to with-
 draw the *afflatus* of his breath, and life would die out of the
 ver. 16-21. world. Is it credible that such a God, so omnipotent, so
 omniscient, Whose mere word can bring destruction alike to
 monarchs and to nations, Whose eye *sees* at a glance *all*
their goings, and pierces even the *very shadow of death*, would be
 morally imperfect or unjust? No, He is too lofty. He looks
 down on kings and princes with equal and impartial eye.
 He is too great for caprice or partiality.' *Shall not the judge*
of all the earth do right? he cries with Abraham². *Is God*
unrighteous? *God forbid!* he cries with St. Paul³.

It is an appeal, after all, to the sense of God's perfection
 as imprinted on the human conscience. The thought, he
 says, with Bishop Butler, that God can be unjust, is one that
 contradicts our most primary instincts. Is there no wisdom
 in his words?

And then after asserting, or seeming to assert—for the
 words that follow are exceedingly obscure—that, as a matter
 ver. 22-28. of fact, God does strike down the wicked, and does listen to
 the cry of the oppressed, he ends the chapter by once more
 rebuking Job with a stern severity that exceeds even that of
 his friends.

¹ E. g. ix. 22, and xxi. and xxiv. throughout.

² Gen. xviii. 25.

³ Rom. iii. 5.

*Job speaketh without knowledge,
And his words are without wisdom.
Would that Job were tried unto the end,
Because of his answering like wicked men.
For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,
He clappeth his hands among us,
And multiplieth his words against God.*

LECTURE
XI.

Chapter
xxxiv.
ver. 35-37.

But Job is still silent. And once more, in Chapter xxxv, his young reprover attacks him for his denial of a righteous rule on earth. 'Thee,' he says, 'thee and those, the wicked, whose ranks thou joinest by such language, I will answer.' We feel at once that he has seized with undue asperity on one undoubted side of Job's language; has overlooked Job's horror of all that is evil; his clinging in his darkest mood to the God who afflicted him. Elihu is not the last religious and God-fearing controversialist who has not shrunk from asserting that he—it may be some truth-loving brother Christian—who perhaps rightly, perhaps mistakenly, differs from him, places himself at once in the ranks of non-believers, even worships another God. And we feel also that his own answer is as far from being adequate as it is hard and unsympathising; that his 'pleadings for God,' however interesting, will hardly bring much peace to Job's troubled soul. 'Look up,' he says, 'through the height of æther to the heaven above. Can *thy* innocence, *thy* guilt, affect the infinite Being Who sits above them? Is He in thy debt, because thou hast served Him?

Chapter
xxxv.

ver. 2-4.

ver. 5, 6.

If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?

ver. 7.

Or what receiveth he of thine hand?

Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art;

ver. 8.

And thy righteousness may profit a son of man.

Yet it seems as if Elihu feels that he is pressing in a wrong

LECTURE
XI.Chapter
XXXV.

direction the argument to be drawn from God's greatness. If it is true that because God is so great and so high, the innocence or guilt of a petty human being is a matter of profound indifference to his Maker, on the ground that it can bring Him neither gain nor loss, we are landed, we see at once, on a very gloomy shore. We reach a conclusion fatal to all religion. If there is this impassable gulf between God and man, what room is left in human life for devotion, or faith, or prayer? for all that unites earth to heaven? It is the creed, that died almost at its birth, of the Deism of the early part of the eighteenth century.

So he proceeds to alter his course, and to feel his way to some higher explanation of the unredressed miseries of life.

ver. 9. His words deserve full attention. 'True,' he says, 'a voice of wailing goes up from earth, a groan of suffering under injustice and oppression. But it is a mere cry of pain, not a

ver. 10. turning to God, man's Maker, to Him Who *giveth songs in the night*, brings i. e. a joyful sense of sudden deliverance in the

ver. 11-15. very darkest hour of tribulation. God would have men cry to him with something more worthy of those whom He has made in His own image, than the mere inarticulate cries of

ver. 11. *the beast of the earth, the fowls of heaven*. He has taught us more than the one, he has made us wiser than the other. Empty moans, empty cries, will not reach His ear. Thy passionate words give thee no claim, Job,' he seems to say, 'on God; and thy prayers to Him, have not risen above mere childish brute-like cries of pain.'

ver. 16. *Therefore, so ends the chapter, doth Job open his mouth in vanity;*

He multiplieth words without knowledge.

Whatever be the position of Elihu in the book, he clearly

represents one who, while he had little more tenderness for the distress and perplexity of the patriarch than the older friends who stood silent by his side, yet was sincerely anxious to shew him a more excellent way.

He has yet, he says, starting again with a fresh statement of his eagerness 'to justify the ways of God to man,' *somewhat to say on God's behalf*. 'Mighty as God is, mighty as I have pictured Him, He is yet no scornful or arrogant Being ; *He despiseth not any* ; He uplifts the righteous, even as He once did thee,' he seems to mean, 'and places them high in wealth and estate like kings upon their thrones. And if affliction comes upon them'—an affliction described under the image of *cords* and *fetters*, reminding us of the *fast-bound in misery and iron* of the Psalmist¹—'He would have them take it as a chastening and corrective and instructive discipline, and if they do this, *they spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasantness*. But if not, they die in their infatuation. God is always ready to deliver the pious sufferer and to make his sufferings a means of teaching.' Πάθει μάθος, said the Greek ; 'teaching comes by suffering,' says Elihu. 'So thee too, Job, hadst thou continued in thy submissive frame, and taken thy pains as a means of discipline, He would have led out of the jaws of distress, *into a broad place where there is no straitness*, and thy table'—like that of the thankful Psalmist—'should have been richly spread with blessings. But now, a just judgment keeps hold of thee. Ere it is too late, beware lest thy wrathful fretfulness lead thee into rebellion, nor shrink from the *ransom* which he asks, thy full submission and humiliation. Offer this ere it be too late, and challenge not his judgment. Provoke not that wrath against which

LECTURE
XI.Chapter
xxxvi.

ver. 5.

ver. 7.

ver. 8.

ver. 9, 10.

ver. 11.

ver. 12-14.

ver. 15.

ver. 16.

ver. 17-18.

ver. 19-21.

¹ Psalm cvii. 10. (Prayer Book.)

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—♦♦—
Chapter
xxxvi.

human riches'—he seems for a moment to forget Job's present destitution—'and human strength are unavailing; that wrath that can cut off nations, as some black night cuts short the sunlight. Beware, beware, impatient Job!'

How strange his language would sound to those who only knew the patriarch through the first two chapters, and had heard of him only as the type of patience!

- ver. 22-26. And then he reminds Job that there is no *teacher* like God—that none can teach Him, that God is great, unknowable, eternal. And having said this, he breaks forth into a lengthened description of the wisdom and mightiness of
- ver. 27-31. God, as shewn in the phenomena of rain, and cloud, and mist, and tempest. He speaks of the lightning that strikes its mark, of the sounds and signs, read by the startled
- Chapter xxxvii.
ver. 1-5. cattle, that foretell the storm. And then, in the next chapter, the young speaker throws his whole force into a picture of that *at which his heart trembleth and is moved out of its place*. He tells of the thunder which, following fast upon the lightning that flashes *unto the ends of the earth*, is to him, as to the Psalmist, the very *voice of God*. He points him to the winter,
- ver. 6, 7. with its snow and rain, that *sealeth up the hand of every man*, suspends, as we know too well, all labour, and drives
- ver. 8. the wild beasts to the *coverts of their dens*. He tells of the
- ver. 8-13. winds that obscure or clear the sky, of the clouds that bring alike fertility and ruin, *correction* or *mercy*. And thus, anticipating what is to come, and speaking as the very
- ver. 15-19. precursor of Him Who has yet to speak, he appeals to Job to confess his ignorance of the secrets of God's working in nature; of cold and heat, of light and darkness; and ends—ending, as some would have us believe, while the very storm out of which Jehovah is to speak was gathering—with

reasserting that great as God is, and past human comprehension as is His nature, yet for all that, He is infinitely just and righteous, and incapable of wrong :

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out ; he is excellent in power :

And in judgement and plenteous justice he will not afflict. ‘Awe of Him, therefore, is man’s proper attitude, and He *regardeth not* those who,’ like Job, he seems to say, ‘are wise in their own sight.’

So end the chapters which have caused, as I have already said, such controversy and perplexity to commentators, and have elicited such irreconcilable judgments alike from older and from modern critics. I have tried, not to trace their meaning through verse after verse, but to put their main substance before you, and have not ventured to give a dogmatic or contemptuous answer to the objections that have been so often made against recognising them as part of the original Book of Job.

I allow the force of these objections. It *is* startling, let me say once more, that one who blames Job so fiercely, and at such length, should be absolutely unnoticed in the final award, and that the chapter which follows his long address should pass back at once to Job’s last words, and should begin—*then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind.*

It is true also that the style, as we may see even in an English version, is different from, more perplexed and obscure than, what has gone before. We cannot refuse our assent to the remark that ‘his accents are somewhat trembling and hesitating, his arguments somewhat confused and complicated.’ It is not, moreover, very easy to deny that much of his language looks like that of a careful *reader* of Job’s

LECTURE
XI.

Chapter
xxxvii.
ver. 23.

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XI.
—♦—

speeches, rather than of a *listener* ; or that his final chapter is in a great measure a mere anticipation of what follows. It is true at the same time, that strongly as the young speaker blames the elder friends, yet the essential difference between his line of thought and theirs, is that without abandoning the view, which they have urged so vehemently, that even in this life men receive their full deserts, he seems to sit more loosely to it. He prefers rather to try to lift Job out of and above the question of his own personal guilt or innocence. He expounds and dwells upon the larger question, the chastening, warning, and educational intention of suffering, in a far more full and developed manner than the occasional hints of his elders had reached ; and it may well be, that by so doing, he is helping to lead the distracted sufferer, whose soul has been so beclouded by the sense of wrong, if not into light, yet out of the thickest darkness, and to guide him towards the fuller light which is soon to be vouchsafed to him.

And I think you will agree with me that, even supposing that these chapters are the work of one other than the actual author, of one who felt moved to feel out for some fuller solution of the mystery of suffering than Job's friends had reached, towards something more positive, more wholly satisfying than is to be found even in the chapters that follow, yet that they are not unworthy of their place in this great drama ; and that they may fitly pourtray the feelings of a younger generation, not ready to echo the wild cries of Job at the perplexities of life, but eager to grope for, and find, if possible, some nearer approach to an answer to those cries, and led in the process of doing so, even as Alchemists of old, to some real truths.

We may recognise in the young Elihu no unfit picture of those who, whether present to the mind of the author himself, or of a somewhat later generation, would blame, with all the impetuosity of pious youth, the rashness, as it seemed, of Job, and would venture, with something also of the boldness of youth, to believe that they had laid their hands on a secret that would solve his perplexities; and who might yet contribute something solid, valuable, and worthy of the patient study which the confessed difficulty and obscurity of the language of these chapters imposes on the student. We shall feel that the words before us, even if lacking in sympathy with trials into which the inexperience of youth could hardly enter with entire fulness, yet are not the words of an evil spirit, nor those of a mere babbler, but of one of those who, in a far off age, searched diligently after truth, and laid their hands on some portion at least of what they sought.

One word more. These chapters intensify the sense of the loneliness and solitude of Job. He stands there, silent and alone, with none to sympathise with him, none to enter into his perplexities; condemned as impious, heretical, and even blasphemous, by the concordant voice of friends and bystanders; alike by his own generation, and by that which was growing up to take its place; yet 'enduring to the end,' *contra mundum—contra ecclesiam*, we may almost add—*unus*, and awaiting with trust and confidence the verdict of his God. What that verdict was, we shall hear next time we meet.

March 6, 1886.

LECTURE XII.

CHAPTERS XXXVIII—XLII.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

(REVISED VERSION. CHAPS. XXXVIII—XLII.)

- 38** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, CHAPTER XXXVIII.
² Who is this that darkeneth counsel
By words without knowledge?
³ Gird up now thy loins like a man;
For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
⁴ Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, ¹ if thou hast understanding.
⁵ Who determined the measures thereof, ² if thou knowest?
Or who stretched the line upon it?
⁶ Whereupon were the ³ foundations thereof ⁴ fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
⁷ When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
⁸ Or *who* shut up the sea with doors,
When it brake forth, ⁵ *as if* it had issued out of the womb;
⁹ When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,
¹⁰ And ⁶ prescribed for it my ⁷ decree,
And set bars and doors,
¹¹ And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?
¹² Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days *began*,
And caused the dayspring to know its place;
¹³ That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
¹⁴ It is changed as clay under the seal;
And *all things* stand forth ⁸ as a garment:
¹⁵ And from the wicked their light is withholden,

¹ Heb. *if thou knowest understanding.*

² Or, *seeing*

³ Heb. *sockets.*

⁴ Heb. *made to sink.*

⁵ Or, *and issued*

⁶ Heb. *brake.*

⁷ Or, *boundary*

⁸ Or, *as in a garment*

CHAPTER	And the high arm is broken.	
XXXVIII.	Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?	16
—+—	Or hast thou walked in the ¹ recesses of the deep?	
¹ Or, <i>search</i>	Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee?	17
	Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death?	
	Hast thou comprehended the breadth of the earth?	18
	Declare, if thou knowest it all.	
	Where is the way to the dwelling of light,	19
	And as for darkness, where is the place thereof;	
	That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,	20
	And that thou shouldest discern the paths to the house thereof?	
	<i>Doubtless</i> , thou knowest, for thou wast then born,	21
	And the number of thy days is great!	
	Hast thou entered the treasures of the snow,	22
	Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,	
	Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,	23
	Against the day of battle and war?	
² Or,	² By what way is the light parted,	24
<i>Which is</i>	Or the east wind scattered upon the earth?	
<i>the way</i>	Who hath cleft a channel for the waterflood,	25
to the	Or a way for the lightning of the thunder;	
place	To cause it to rain on a land where no man is;	26
where <i>the</i>	On the wilderness, wherein there is no man;	
<i>light is &c.</i>	To satisfy the waste and desolate <i>ground</i> ;	27
³ Or,	And to cause the ³ tender grass to spring forth?	
<i>greensward</i>	Hath the rain a father?	28
⁴ Or, <i>given</i>	Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?	
<i>it birth</i>	Out of whose womb came the ice?	29
⁵ Or, <i>are</i>	And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath ⁴ gendered it?	
<i>congealed</i>	The waters ⁵ are hidden as <i>with</i> stone,	30
<i>like stone</i>	And the face of the deep ⁶ is frozen.	
⁶ Heb.	Canst thou bind the ⁷ cluster of the Pleiades,	31
<i>cohereth.</i>	Or loose the bands of Orion?	
⁷ Or, <i>chain</i>	Canst thou lead forth ⁸ the Mazzaroth in their season?	32
Or, <i>sweet</i>	Or canst thou guide the Bear with her ⁹ train?	
<i>influences</i>	Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens?	33
⁸ Or, <i>the</i>		
<i>signs of the</i>		
<i>Zodiac</i>		
⁹ Heb. <i>sons</i>	Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth?	

CHAPTER
XXXVIII.



- 34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,
That abundance of waters may cover thee?
- 35 Canst thou send forth lightnings, that they may go,
And say unto thee, Here we are?
- 36 Who hath put wisdom in the ¹inward parts?
Or who hath given understanding to the ²mind?
- 37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can ³pour out the bottles of heaven,
- 38 When the dust runneth into a mass,
And the clods cleave fast together?
- 39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lioness?
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
- 40 When they couch in their dens,
And abide in the covert to lie in wait?
- 41 Who provideth for the raven his food,
When his young ones cry unto God,
And wander for lack of meat?
- 39 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock
bring forth?
Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?
- 2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil?
Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?
- 3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young,
They cast out their sorrows.
- 4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up in the
open field;
They go forth, and ⁴return not again.
- 5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free?
Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?
- 6 Whose house I have made the wilderness,
And the salt land his dwelling place.
- 7 He scorneth the tumult of the city,
Neither heareth he the shoutings of the ⁵driver.
- 8 The range of the mountains is his pasture,
And he searcheth after every green thing.
- 9 Will the ⁶wild-ox be content to serve thee?
Or will he abide by thy crib?

¹ Or, *dark clouds*

² Or, *meteor*

³ Heb. *cause to lie down.*

⁴ Or, *return not unto them*

⁵ Or, *task-master*

⁶ See Num. xxiii. 22.

CHAPTER XXXIX.	Canst thou bind the wild-ox with his band in the furrow?	10
—♦♦—	Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?	
	Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great?	11
	Or wilt thou leave to him thy labour?	
	Wilt thou confide in him, that he will bring home thy seed,	12
	And gather <i>the corn of</i> thy threshing-floor?	
	The wing of the ostrich rejoiceth;	13
¹ Or, like <i>the stork's</i>	<i>But</i> are her pinions and feathers ¹ kindly?	
	For she leaveth her eggs on the earth,	14
	And warmeth them in the dust,	
	And forgetteth that the foot may crush them,	15
	Or that the wild beast may trample them.	
² Or, <i>dealeth hardly with</i>	She ² is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers:	16
	Though her labour be in vain, <i>she is</i> without fear;	
³ Heb. <i>made her to forget wisdom.</i>	Because God hath ³ deprived her of wisdom,	17
	Neither hath he imparted to her understanding.	
⁴ Or, <i>rouseth herself up to flight</i>	What time she ⁴ lifteth up herself on high,	18
	She scorneth the horse and his rider.	
⁵ Heb. <i>shaking.</i>	Hast thou given the horse <i>his</i> might?	19
	Hast thou clothed his neck with ⁵ the quivering mane?	
	Hast thou made him to leap as a locust?	20
⁶ Heb. <i>They paw.</i>	The glory of his snorting is terrible.	
	⁶ He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:	21
⁷ Or, <i>the weapons</i>	He goeth out to meet ⁷ the armed men.	
	He mocketh at fear, and is not dismayed;	22
	Neither turneth he back from the sword.	
⁸ Or, <i>upon</i>	The quiver rattleth ⁸ against him,	23
	The flashing spear and the javelin.	
	He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;	24
⁹ Or, <i>Neither standeth he still at &c.</i>	⁹ Neither believeth he that it is the voice of the trumpet.	
	As oft as the trumpet <i>soundeth</i> he saith, Aha!	25
	And he smelleth the battle afar off,	
	The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.	
	Doth the hawk soar by thy wisdom,	26
	<i>And</i> stretch her wings toward the south?	
	Doth the eagle mount up at thy command,	27

- And make her nest on high?
 28 She dwelleth on the rock, and hath her lodging *there*,
 Upon the crag of the rock, and the strong hold.
 29 From thence she spieth out the prey;
 Her eyes behold it afar off.
 30 Her young ones also suck up blood:
 And where the slain are, there is she.
- 40 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,
 2 Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty?
 He that argueth with God, let him answer it.
- 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
 4 Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?
 I lay mine hand upon my mouth.
 5 Once have I spoken, and I will not answer;
 Yea twice, but I will proceed no further.
- 6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,
 7 Gird up thy loins now like a man:
 I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
 8 Wilt thou even disannul my judgement?
 Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?
 9 Or hast thou an arm like God?
 And canst thou thunder with a voice like him?
 10 Deck thyself now with excellency and dignity;
 And array thyself with honour and majesty.
 11 Pour forth the overflowings of thine anger:
 And look upon every one that is proud, and abase him.
 12 Look on every one that is proud, *and* bring him low;
 And tread down the wicked where they stand.
 13 Hide them in the dust together;
 Bind their faces in the hidden *place*.
 14 Then will I also confess of thee
 That thine own right hand can save thee.
 15 Behold now ¹ behemoth, which I made with thee;
 He eateth grass as an ox.
 16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins,
 And his force is in the muscles of his belly.

¹ That is,
the hippo-
potamus.

CHAPTER	He moveth his tail like a cedar :	17
XL.	The sinews of his thighs are knit together.	
—♦—	His bones are <i>as</i> tubes of brass ;	18
¹ Or, <i>ribs</i>	His ¹ limbs are like bars of iron.	
	He is the chief of the ways of God :	19
² Or, <i>He that made him hath furnished him with his sword</i>	² He <i>only</i> that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.	
	Surely the mountains bring him forth food ;	20
	Where all the beasts of the field do play.	
	He lieth under the lotus trees,	21
	In the covert of the reed, and the fen.	
	The lotus trees cover him with their shadow ;	22
	The willows of the brook compass him about.	
³ Or, <i>be violent</i>	Behold, if a river ³ overflow, he trembleth not :	23
	He is confident, though Jordan swell even to his mouth.	
	Shall any take him when he is on the watch,	24
	Or pierce through his nose with a snare?	
[Ch. xl. 25 in Heb.]	Canst thou draw out ⁴ leviathan with a fish hook?	41
⁴ That is, <i>the crocodile.</i>	Or press down his tongue with a cord?	
	Canst thou put ⁵ a rope into his nose?	2
⁵ Heb. <i>a rope of rushes.</i>	Or pierce his jaw through with a ⁶ hook?	
⁶ Or, <i>spike</i>	Will he make many supplications unto thee?	3
	Or will he speak soft words unto thee?	
	Will he make a covenant with thee,	4
	That thou shouldest take him for a servant for ever?	
	Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?	5
	Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?	
	Shall the bands <i>of fishermen</i> make traffic of him?	6
	Shall they part him among the merchants?	
	Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons,	7
	Or his head with fish spears?	
	Lay thine hand upon him ;	8
	Remember the battle, and do so no more.	
[Ch. xli. 1 in Heb.]	Behold, the hope of him is in vain :	9
	Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?	
	None is so fierce that he dare stir him up :	10
	Who then is he that can stand before me?	

- 11 Who hath first given unto me, that I should repay him?
Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.
- 12 I will not keep silence concerning his limbs,
Nor his mighty strength, nor his comely proportion.
- 13 Who can ¹strip off his outer garment?
Who shall come within his double bridle?
- 14 Who can open the doors of his face?
²Round about his teeth is terror.
- 15 *His* ³strong scales are *his* pride,
Shut up together *as with* a close seal.
- 16 One is so near to another,
That no air can come between them.
- 17 They are joined one to another;
They stick together, that they cannot be sundered.
- 18 His neesings flash forth light,
And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.
- 19 Out of his mouth go burning torches,
And sparks of fire leap forth.
- 20 Out of his nostrils a smoke goeth,
As of a seething pot and *burning* rushes.
- 21 His breath kindleth coals,
And a flame goeth forth from his mouth.
- 22 In his neck abideth strength,
And terror danceth before him.
- 23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together:
They are firm upon him; they cannot be moved.
- 24 His heart is as firm as a stone;
Yea, firm as the nether millstone.
- 25 When he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid:
By reason of consternation they are beside themselves
- 26 If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail;
Nor the spear, the dart, nor the ⁴pointed shaft.
- 27 He counteth iron as straw,
And brass as rotten wood.
- 28 The ⁵arrow cannot make him flee:
Slingstones are turned with him into stubble.
- 29 Clubs are counted as stubble:

CHAPTER
XLI.

¹ Heb.
*uncover the
face of his
garment.*

² Or, *His
teeth are
terrible
round
about*

³ Or,
*courses of
scales*
Heb.
*channels
of shields.*

⁴ Or, *coat
of mail*

⁵ Heb. *so
of the bow.*

CHAPTER	He laugheth at the rushing of the javelin.	
XLI.	His underparts are <i>like</i> sharp potsherds :	30
—♦♦—	He spreadeth <i>as it were</i> a threshing wain upon the mire.	
	He maketh the deep to boil like a pot :	31
	He maketh the sea like ointment.	
	He maketh a path to shine after him ;	32
	One would think the deep to be hoary.	
	Upon earth there is not his like,	33
	That is made without fear.	
	He beholdeth every thing that is high :	34
¹ See ch. xxviii. 8.	He is king over all the ¹ sons of pride.	
	Then Job answered the LORD, and said,	42
	I know that thou canst do all things,	2
	And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.	
² See ch. xxxviii. 2.	² Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?	3
	Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,	
	Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.	
	Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak ;	4
³ See ch. xxxviii. 3, xl. 7.	³ I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.	
	I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ;	5
	But now mine eye seeth thee,	6
⁴ Or, <i>loath</i> my words	Wherefore I ⁴ abhor <i>myself</i> , and repent	
	In dust and ashes.	

And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words 7
unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is
kindled against thee, and against thy two friends : for ye have
not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.
Now therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, 8
and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt
offering ; and my servant Job shall pray for you ; for him will
I accept, that I deal not with you after your folly ; for ye have
not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.
So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar 9
the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD com-
manded them : and the LORD accepted Job. And the LORD 10
turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends : and
the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came 11

there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house : and they bemoaned him, and comforted him concerning all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him : every man also gave him a ¹piece of money, and every one
12 a ring of gold. So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more ¹Heb. *kesitah*.
than his beginning : and he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a
13 thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daugh-
14 ters. And he called the name of the first, Jemimah ; and the name of the second, Keziah ; and the name of the third, Keren-
15 happuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job : and their father gave them inheritance
16 among their brethren. And after this Job lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four
17 generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.

LECTURE XII.

CHAPTERS XXXVIII—XLII.

Jehovah.

WE open to-day Chapter xxxviii. It begins with a line that at once calls back our thoughts from all side issues to the central question of the Book. For a moment its unknown author speaks to us in his own person.

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XII.



Chapter
xxxviii.

Then JEHOVAH—he uses after his wont the most sacred designation of the God of the covenant race, so rarely placed on the lips of the speakers in the dialogue¹—

Then JEHOVAH *answered Job out of the whirlwind.*

The Lord of all is to end the controversy. But we have no mediæval mystery-play before us. No Divine Being, figured in some familiar human guise, will tread the stage. As with Psalmist after Psalmist, *clouds and darkness are round about him*²; *he rides upon the wings of the wind*³; His voice is heard in the rolling thunder⁴; His presence is veiled, as so often, in thick darkness.

But from that veil His voice comes at last, and reveals His presence. It is the voice, and it is the presence, for which Job has sought so long and so earnestly. Human advisers have done their best and their worst. The Divine Counsellor comes at last to the sufferer's side. The hour is come, and his desire is granted. We bend forward to listen to the answer. What is it?

It begins with words of stern and majestic rebuke:

¹ See pp. 32, 33.

² Psalm xcvii. 2.

³ Psalm xviii. 10.

⁴ Psalm xxix; lxxvii. 18.

LECTURE
XII.Chapter
xxxviii.

ver. 2.

*Who is this that darkeneth counsel
By words without knowledge?*

Darkeneth counsel; 'throws a shadow across, hides from view,' or, as we should say, 'distorts, misrepresents, misreads, puts in a false light, my wise designs.'

The first words seem of evil omen for Job¹. He has his wish :
Call thou, he had said long since, *and I will answer,*
*Or let me speak, and answer thou me*².

And now the challenge comes from on high. It comes in the form of questions :

ver. 3.

*Gird up now thy loins like a man ;
For I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

And what are the questions in which Jehovah's answer is framed? Those who have followed Job's sad story and feverish questionings, might well have hoped that, with such a knot to untie, the voice of God would not have been heard unless to solve the whole enigma that had so perplexed him. Now, at last, we say, the clouds will be rolled away, and those scenes in Heaven will no longer be a secret to Job and to his friends. He will know, and they will know, that his early and supreme patience under loss and suffering had been a spectacle to other worlds than his own, and had taught both Satan and the sons of God, that a man might care for God without bribe or gratuity. Surely too, he will hear something that, if it does not *swallow up death in victory*, will at least lift *the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations*³. Some glance will be given him into the world beyond the grave, that will answer his own eager

¹ Indeed, by Gregory, and even by some later critics, they are taken as addressed not to Job, but to Elihu.

² Job xiii. 22.

³ Isaiah xxv. 7.

and passionate aspirations, will give shape to his own half-articulate words, reveal something of the mystery of pain and death, and will tell him plainly that this life is but a fragment of a larger life, and that those of God's children who suffer here, *suffer that they may be glorified*¹ hereafter. Such an answer we ourselves might have framed for the lips of Him, Who has now come forward to reveal Himself to His ancient friend, and by doing so shews him that he is not left alone—alone as in his despair he deemed himself—in a world ruled by hazard, or ruled by evil.

But for such an answer we shall look in vain. Of the witness to immortal truths, which Job's submission had borne in those earlier scenes, there is not a word. Nor does his Maker and his Judge deign to justify Himself; nor does He for a moment lift the veil that hangs before the gate of death. Let us listen carefully to the message which at least brought peace and rest to him who heard it.

It begins, as we have seen, with a rebuke to Job for his presumption; for this and this only. I need hardly say, that of any approach to his friends' hints, any accusations of a sinful life, there is not, there could not be, a trace. His divine friend saw what was amiss in him, *they* did not. *They* tried their remedies long and vainly. *He* laid His hand upon the sick man, and healed him with a touch.

And how did the Divine Healer work? Job has asked for a solution of his own hard destiny; he has shrieked at times against the puzzles and anomalies of human life. 'Can he,' asks that still small voice, 'can he read other mysteries? Are these, over which he frets and chafes, the only questions which are dark to him, beyond his power to read—beyond, it

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

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—♦—
Chapter
xxxviii.

may be, his faculties to grasp, if read to him syllable by syllable? Is this difficulty, against which his soul is beating itself so fiercely, the one dark spot in a universe radiant elsewhere and transparent to his view? Or is he surrounded on all sides with clouds which his eye cannot penetrate? Can he read the secrets of Creation, of the dawn and history of the universe, of life in its manifold and vigorous forms, fair and monstrous, that swarm around him?' 'Can he,' he is asked later on, '*abase the proud, tread down the wicked*¹? Is he qualified to penetrate into the central chamber of the government of the world, and guide the forces which impart and give shape to life, which rule the distribution of good and evil? Or is he weak and ignorant, able to read only a fragment of the mighty laws which shape alike the course of the stars, the whole range of organic life, and the destiny of man? Which is best? To proclaim that all this array of nature and of life is a realm of disorder or misrule, because *thou* canst not unravel the secret of thine own pains, and of earth's seeming wrongs? Or to trust in Him, thine ancient Friend, Who without aid of thine, called into being "this universal frame?" To trust in Him as the sender, for His own wise purposes, of this, thy sore affliction?' Such is the substance of the answer he receives, the mere substance, when we strip it of its splendid imagery, and its magnificent illustrations.

Let us now follow that answer shortly through the various forms in which it is clothed.

First, if you glance at Chapter xxxviii, you will see that Job is placed face to face with the immensity of nature—not, I need hardly say of nature, as studied in the light of modern science—but of the vast and infinite, and overpowering

¹ Job xl. 11, 12.

phenomena of nature and of life, as revealed to human eyes in those early days. He is carried back to the very origin of earth, and sea, and light ; and at each successive stage comes a majestic question, with a lightning flash, as it were, of the primeval poetry of Creation. ‘ *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations, and planted the corner stone, of the solid earth ?* When the angelic hosts,’ so often identified with the stars of heaven, ‘ hailed the dawn of a new-born world ? ’

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XII.

Chapter
xxxviii.

ver. 4-7.

When the morning stars sang together,

ver. 7.

And all the sons of God shouted for joy ?

‘ Was it thou, who, when the Ocean first emerged from Chaos, bade the flying sea-mists sweep across it, and imprisoned it within its rocky, broken, rugged shores ? Thou, who subjected the wild and capricious waves to the supremacy of law ?

ver. 8-10.

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further ;

ver. 11.

And here shall thy proud waves be stayed ?

Some of you may recall the story of the Danish king, which one tradition placed within a few yards of the place where you are seated. Back too, he is called to the birthday of the sunlight :

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days began,

ver. 12.

And caused the dayspring to know its place ?

We see, through the mist which envelopes the words in our older version, the sudden eastern dawn, scaring with its fierce light the nightly thief or prowling assassin ; bringing out, as with an instantaneous touch, in a land where twilight is none or little, the features of the landscape, sharp and clear as clay beneath the impress of a seal ; and giving to each object its own special raiment of form and colour :

ver. 12-15.

It is changed as clay under the seal,

ver. 14.

And all things stand forth as in a garment.

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xxxviii.

ver. 16-20.

Then his brain is made dizzy by challenges, now to penetrate the springs that feed the ocean; now to guide the way to *the Gates of Death, the Gates of the Shadow of Death*; now to the mysterious homes of Light and Darkness.

Doubtless, comes in stately irony the taunt,

ver. 21.

*Thou knowest, for thou wast then born,
And the number of thy days is great!*

ver. 22-27.

Or he is called on to tell the secrets, now of the airy *treasure-houses* of snow and hail, and of all the terrible artillery of the skies; now of the storms that bring the rain—the rain, that here feeds the torrents that cleave the mountains and shape the earth; there falls far away on the untenanted steppe, *on a land where no man is*, in the form of fertilising shower—

ver. 27.

*To satisfy the waste and desolate ground;
And to cause the tender grass to spring forth?*

We seem as we read to hear the

‘Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass.’

ver. 28-30. ‘The rain, the dew, the ice, the hoar frost, the winter’s cold that turns to stone the inland seas—what knows Job of their origin, what of their laws?’

And for a moment his gaze is turned upward to the stars of Heaven, and we catch once more dim faint traces of world-old legends, still lingering among Arab races that from immemorial time have looked through that dry cloudless air

ver. 31, 32.

on the clustering Pleiades, on Orion rising from his prison-house or his grave, or on the train of stars that we call the

ver. 33-38.

Bear. Back he is called from those nightly stars, that have revealed to us secrets of the immensity of nature, unknown to Job; back once more through the phenomena of clouds, and lightning, and rain, to his own ignorance and insignificance.

Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds?

Canst thou send forth lightnings that they may go?

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Chapter
xxxviii.

ver. 33-35.

I only pause for a moment, not to discuss one or two doubtful expressions—their number is happily not great—but to remind you how every step made by modern science has written, as it were, a tenfold meaning into the words which we are reading; how much we have learned alike of the ‘marvellous complexity’ and of the ‘unbroken order’ of the material world¹ which was dark to Job; how much also of our own ignorance.

And then, in what should clearly be the beginning of a fresh chapter, at verse 39, he is called on to survey the innumerable forms of wild, untamed, untamable life, that tenanted in those early days so large a portion of earth’s surface. He is bidden to fix his eye on the kingly lions that need no aid from man—on the wild ravens, whose young ones’ cry mounts up, to the poet’s ear, as prayer to the Father of all life—on the wild rock-goats, who bring forth their vigorous race, untended, unmarked by man—on the indomitable wild ass, who with the range of the mountains for his pasture, *scorneth the tumult of cities and heareth not the shoutings of the driver*—creatures so strong, so rude, so free, rejoicing in a liberty to which man can bring no bonds. And then, adding to each picture touch after touch, drawn each in turn, as we see, from the trackless plains, and rolling acclivities, and wild mountains of Arabian lands, he puts before him, first the mighty primeval buffalo²—rendered unfortunately so often in

ver. 39-41.

ver. 39, 40.

ver. 41.

Chapter
xxxix.

ver. 1-4.

ver. 5-8.

ver. 9-12.

¹ Dean Stanley’s Sermon ‘On the Perplexities of Life,’ referred to in Lecture XI.

² I have followed our Revisers. But there is still some question as to

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XII.Chapter
xxxix.

ver. 13-18.

our familiar version by the meaningless heraldic *unicorn*—‘a creature whom none dare harness to draw the plough—whom none dare trust to carry home the garnered wheat.’ And next we see the sullen ostrich, so like, yet so unlike the pious stork ¹, so dull to natural feeling that she leaves her eggs to be crushed by the passing foot of man or beast; *hardened*, we read, *against her young ones, as if they were not hers*; yet when once roused to speed, able to scorn alike the horse and its rider. And his closing words lead up to the immortal picture, the oldest and the most magnificent, may we not say in

ver. 19-25.

all literature, of the Arab steed. It is not a picture, we must remember, of the horse as the servant of man in the peaceful toil of industry, as his comrade in subduing nature ², but in the one form known to Arabian, or Hebrew, or Egyptian races, as the fiery, snorting, neighing war horse of the boundless desert—with his strong neck clothed with the quivering mane, bounding from side to side with the agility of the leaping and devouring locust; *pawing in the valley and rejoicing in his strength*, answering undismayed the trumpet’s call with his far-pealing neigh; swallowing, as it were, the plain as it disappears beneath his feet, *smelling the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting*. ‘Was it thou,’ comes the question, ‘that gave him his strength, his comeliness, his speed, his courage?’ ‘Or was it thou,’ he is asked,

ver. 26-30.

‘that taught the hawk to soar so high, and wing his course to the warm south after his migratory prey? Was it thou who taught the eagle to make her nest on the homeless peak? To shelter her fierce brood on the tall bare crag?’ And so the whether it is the *bos primigena*, or some powerful animal of the deer kind that is intended. The *unicorn* of our older version, here and elsewhere, is evidently used to represent an animal of great strength and ferocity.

¹ See Revised Version, Margin.² Antigone, 338-341.

series of pictures that began with the king of beasts, ends with that of the queen of birds, sighting the prey afar off, and leaving her eyrie to hover over the smokeless battles of that distant day:

Her young ones also suck up blood:

And where the slain are, there is she.

We almost lose, do we not, the thought of all besides, in the lyrical splendour of the poetry?

So far then, the mysterious phenomena of the universe, the varied forms of animal life, have been flashed before the eyes of Job, and for a moment he is asked whether he will persist in upbraiding Him, Whose power and wisdom lies behind all that he has seen. And there comes from him, in chapter xl, a humble answer. 'He will lay his hand on his mouth. Once he has spoken, but it is enough; yea twice, but he will cavil no more.' And once more he is bidden to have his will; to listen to the voice for which he had called so persistently. He has appealed from the God Who seemed to him to misgovern the world, to the God of righteousness, who must, he felt, some day answer His forlorn and bewildered servant. And that God asks Job now whether, because he is innocent and yet afflicted, he is ready to condemn his Master, or ready to take His place, and administer that world.

'Can he,' he is asked, 'assume the royal robe of the Universal Monarch, can he *array himself with honour and majesty*? Can he with a glance *abase the proud*, and *tread down the wicked*? Has he the knowledge, has he the wisdom, has he the power, to seat himself in God's seat, and right the wrongs of earth?' The questions may remind some of us of one or two powerful passages of most dissimilar,

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Chapter
xxxix.
ver. 30.

Chap. xl.
ver. 2.
ver. 4, 5.

ver. 8-13.

LECTURE XII. yet analogous irony, in one of the least poetical and imaginative of philosophical works, the Analogy of Bishop Butler.

Chap. xl. And then after the words,

ver. 14.

Then will I also confess of thee

That thine own right hand can save thee,

we are suddenly carried away alike from human life and from the plains of Asia, to two elaborate and long drawn descriptions of monstrous, irresistible, untamable creatures, the Behemoth and Leviathan, the *hippopotamus* and *crocodile*, of the river of Egypt and Æthiopia.

I will not ask you to follow these descriptions throughout; nor will I bring before you the views of those who, trying to reconstruct the great poem which we are reading, or to adapt it to the canons of later art and the standard of modern taste, would either set them wholly aside, or place them elsewhere in the poem. The general force of these vivid delineations of uncouth creatures, creatures of a world unknown to the untravelled Hebrew, is clear enough; it is of a piece with much that has gone before.

‘Thou to whom the laws of nature are so dark—thou for whom earth teems with monsters, against which thou art so powerless—wilt thou rashly judge thy God? Wilt *thou* pronounce, with thy narrow experience, and with thy puny strength, that He misgoverns this mysterious world, and that thou, not He, canst read its secrets aright?’

And I wish that time allowed me to read to you at full length the striking words of a great living writer and thinker, as suggested by these very chapters. Mr. Ruskin¹ has been speaking of the tendency of what he looks on as ‘the true and

¹ See Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. chap. 2. I had to thank one of the hearers of these lectures for reminding me beforehand of the passage.

great sciences, to make men gentle and modest, in proportion to the largeness of their apprehension, and just perception of the infiniteness of the things they can never know.'

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—♦♦—
Chap. xl.

He has been speaking of this as 'a great, the great,' he names it, 'lesson of the Book of Job, in which we are shewn that no suffering, no self-examination, however honest, however stern, no searching out of the heart by its own bitterness, is enough to convince man of his nothingness before God; but that the sight of God's creation will do it.' And he ends thus. 'For, when the Deity himself has willed to end the temptation, and to accomplish in Job that for which it was sent, He does not vouchsafe to reason with him, still less does He overwhelm him with terror, or confound him by laying open before his eyes the book of his iniquities. He opens before him the arch of the dayspring, and the foundations of the deep; and amidst the covert of the reeds, and on the heaving waves, He bids him watch the kings of the children of pride—*Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee*, and the work is done.'

Yes! thus ends, suddenly and simply, Jehovah's answer. Chap. xli. Its language has reached at times, we may all feel, the 'high water mark' of poetic power and beauty. Nothing can exceed its dignity, its force, its majesty, the freshness and vigour of some of its pictures of nature and of life. But what shall we say next? It is no answer, we may say, to Job's agonised pleadings. It is no answer to the riddle and problem which the experience and history of human life suggests, even to ourselves. Quite true. There is no direct answer at all. Even those partial answers, partial yet instructive, which have been touched on from time to time, by speaker after speaker, are not glanced at or included in these

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—♦—

Chap. xlii.

final words. It is as though the voice of God did not deign to repeat that He works 'on the side of righteousness.' He only hints at it. Job is not even told of the purpose of the fiery trial through which he himself has passed, of those in other worlds than his own who have watched his pangs. No! God reveals to him his glory, makes him feel where he had gone wrong, how presumptuous he had been. That is all. He does not say 'all this has been a trial of thy righteousness, thou hast been fighting a battle against Satan for me, and hast received many sore wounds.' Nothing is said of the truth, already mooted and enforced in this book, that suffering does its perfect work, when it purifies and elevates the human soul, and draws it nearer to the God Who sends or permits the suffering. Nor is any light thrown on that faint and feeble glimmer of a hope, not yet fully born into the world, of a life beyond the grave; of a life where there shall be no more sorrow or sighing, where Job and his lost sons and daughters shall be reunited. The thoughts that we should have looked for, perhaps longed for, are not here. Those who tell us that the one great lesson of the whole book is to hold up the patriarch Job as the pattern of mere submission, mere resignation—those who search in it for a full *Theodice*, a final vindication, that is, and explanation of God's mode of governing the world—those lastly, who find in it a revelation of the sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality, can scarcely have studied either Job's language, or the chapters which have lain before us to-day. One thought, and one only, is brought into the foreground. The world is full of mysteries, strange, unapproachable, overpowering mysteries that you cannot read. Trust, trust in the power, and in the wisdom, and in the goodness of Him, the Almighty One, who rules it.

‘Turn from the insoluble problems of your own destiny,’ the voice says to him, and says to us. ‘Good men have said their best, wise men have said their wisest. Man is still left to bear the discipline of some questions too hard for him to answer. We cannot solve them. We must rest, if we are to rest at all, in the belief that He Whom we believe to be our Father in heaven, Whom we believe to have been revealed in His Son, is good, and wise, and merciful; that one day, not here, the riddle will be solved; that behind the veil which you cannot pierce, lies the solution in the hand of God.’

Such in substance was the answer that came to Job; so inadequate, so unscientific, so unsatisfying as it may seem to some. Yet strange as it may seem, to him it was sufficient. It was something that God had answered him at all. As he listens, his troubled heart is calmed, and he turns trustfully to his answerer:

*I know, he says, that thou canst do everything,
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.*

Chap. xlii.

ver. 2.

Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?

ver. 3.

He repeats, as though against himself, Jehovah’s own chastening words. ‘I have uttered things beyond my knowledge. No longer do I claim, as I once did, to speak before Thee, to plead my cause. I revoke my words. Before, I knew Thee as a far-off God; now Thou hast made me feel the presence which I have so long desired, for which I craved so earnestly. I repent my rash words, do thou forgive them.

*Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

ver. 3, 5, 6,

* * * * *

*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth thee.*

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Chap. xlii.

*Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent
In dust and ashes.*

And then comes the short and memorable conclusion. We are once more taken back to prose. The author comes forward for the last time in his own person. He takes up and concludes the story. He tells us how Job is reconciled to God, how he is 'accepted' and his friends are censured. All their genuine zeal for God, all the truths which they had uttered, did not compensate for their hard dogmatism, and for their ill-judged application of those truths to God's afflicted servant. And Job's faults, very grave faults, his intemperate, his impatient, his despairing, his audacious, his arrogant and wild words, his beclouded faith, his forgotten humility, are all forgiven him; forgiven freely by Him Who had watched the feverish alternations of his troubled spirit with 'larger, other eyes than ours,' and had welcomed back to His feet the humbled and repentant patriarch. They are forgiven not least—may we not feel sure?—in consideration of the firm and unconquerable tenacity with which he had clung to the conviction that, somehow or other, righteousness and mercy were and must be dear to God, and that if, under any pretext or under any system, they were not dear to Him, the result would be a hideous universe under the misrule of an unjust Master. *Ye have not spoken of me*, we read, *the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath*. For even when he seemed to be challenging and assailing his Divine Friend, he was pleading for his unchangeable attributes of justice and goodness, in virtue of which most of all, not merely of his power or of his wisdom, he claims our reverence and has a right to our homage.

ver. 7.

ver. 10.

And Jehovah, we read, *turned the captivity of Job*: a well-known and suggestive phrase, pointing to the hapless lot,

‘the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner’ in those early and in far later days, ‘fast bound in misery and iron.’ He released him, that is, from all his sufferings, and brought him back to the glad free air of health and well-being.

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Yes, Job is reconciled to God. And God’s unfailing love for his afflicted servant, over whom His heart had yearned in all his pains, through all his outcries, and not less in all his doubts and questionings, is shewn and vindicated by his renewed prosperity, restored health, greater riches, other sons and daughters, sympathising friends and kindred, honoured and lengthened days, by all the conditions of patriarchal happiness. *The Lord blessed the latter end of Job,* we read, *more than the beginning.*

ver. 10-16.
ver. 12.

And these things prove, as I said, God’s love for one who had sorely suffered. Something also they do to relieve the pang which we should all have felt, had Job been left to die, even in submissive resignation, there upon his dunghill. But they do not cancel the story of his sufferings; they do not efface the record of his words. The lost child does not come back; the ‘vanished hand,’ ‘the voice that is still,’ are not, cannot be, replaced. Poignant sorrow, agonising doubts, may have purified Job’s spirit, lifted it into higher regions; but the wounds must have left their marks, the father’s heart have sometimes ached.

And not this only, but if we look beyond the figure of Job to those multitudinous forms of human sorrow, of which he was in a sense the type, we see no lack of instances where the gathering shadows of a darkened life are not followed by any such bright close of countervailing sunshine. And it is perhaps from the sense of this inadequacy of recompense that in the most ancient translation of this very

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Chap. xlii.

book—the Septuagint version, which formed so long, to so large a portion even of the Jewish race, the authorised version of the Old Testament scriptures—we find a clause added that strikes another key, hints that we have before us only the first scenes in a drama not yet played out, only the first few stages of an endless life ; *and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raiseth up.*

One word before we part. We close the book with a sense—may I not hope a heightened sense—alike of its marvellous treasures of interest and instruction ; and, must I not also add, a feeling also of some natural disappointment ? It contains, we say, after all, no complete and cheering answer to questions which the human soul has asked in vain from Job's days to ours ; to which many are returning even now the very gloomiest of all answers. It stirs, we may say if we choose, as has been said of other vindications of God's mysterious rule, more doubts than it solves.

Let us gather up then once more its final teaching. We see Job led as it were to the verge of an impassable sea. A limitless and pathless ocean which he cannot cross is before him. He can go no further. All that we are told is, that God most surely loves him : that He will not answer his eager and passionate questions ; but that through them and in spite of them, he is dear to Him, because he has loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and that for this God cares, and cares infinitely. In the sense of this, and of God's power and wisdom, he must rest content.

And he is taught also, and we are taught through him, that trouble and affliction do not prove God's displeasure ; that the very heaviest, the most overwhelming blows may come from a Maker and a Master, Who is full of love to him

on whom they fall ; may come, as Job's sorrows came, from causes and for purposes far beyond our power to comprehend or guess ; that the darkest clouds may gather over human life ; but that behind them may be a calm, serene, unchanging sunshine ; that the sufferer need not look on God as his enemy, but may draw closer to Him and trust Him wholly. How hard a lesson, and yet how true in the experience of many sufferers ! And the story reminds us also of God's infinite tenderness and forbearance to those who are under trial ; of the patience, not of Job, but of God ; of the loving and fatherly eye with which He can look on the impatience, the fretfulness, the bewilderment, even on the doubts and questionings of His servants. The impatience of Job is answered by the patience and ' pitifulness ' of Job's God :

*The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy*¹.

And this is surely much. The book marks, as I have reminded you more than once before, an era, an epoch, a stage of progress, in God's gradual education of his people. It suggests lessons that must have been precious beyond words to those who had been trained and taught to identify in each special case suffering with ill-doing, sorrow with God's anger. And for ourselves—for us who have left far behind us that simple answer to the problems of life, which satisfied Job's friends, and nearly broke Job's heart—we too feel our darkness still. Life is still full of strange reverses, inexplicable wounds. Yet as we too feel inclined to take our places by Job's side in his hour of doubt, we feel that we have light vouchsafed to us that was withheld from him. The light given in this book was dim and scanty. We see in it the dawn of one of those new and healing truths, fragments

¹ St. James v. 11.

LECTURE of which are flashed upon the human soul in hours of pain.
 XII. But we see the dawn only. The effect of its teaching on the
 —♦♦— Jewish Church was clearly small. Men still needed, centuries
 Chap. xlii. later, to be warned against looking for special judgment in the
 fall of a tower, in the mercilessness of a Roman governor¹.
 More, far more, was needed to complete the teaching which
 the story of Job had inaugurated. The whole revelation of
 the Christian life, of the life of Christ—the upward course of
 one Who was despised, and humiliated, and scourged, and slain,
 Who was ‘made perfect through sufferings’—has brought a new
 idea into the world, one whose future fulness is only indicated
 and foreshadowed in this book. But it was one which the age
 of Job could hardly have conceived, and which centuries later
 the Jewish nation steadfastly rejected. It has leavened race
 after race with the ennobling sense that, as this great tale, as
 this ‘flower of Old Testament poetry,’ has its root in sorrow,
 so the highest, the divinest life may be compatible with sorrow,
 may rest on pain and self-sacrifice. To how many sufferers
 has the lesson come like spring airs to a frozen soil—taught
 them that the truest use of pain, yea sometimes of spiritual
 pain, and racking doubts and disturbing questions, is not to
 paralyse but to strengthen the soul, to brace us to do good
 work for God and man.

And even as that life of Christ would be so meaningless if
 the other world of which He spoke were a mere delusion ; if
 the God, Whose nature He revealed to us, had suffered His
 Holy One to see corruption and extinction ; so to us these
 difficulties and mysteries are inseparably united, not only
 with the sense of God’s undying love for the human race,
 but also with the hope which He has given us of another and

¹ St. Luke xlii. 1-4.

a larger and an unseen world; of a larger dispensation, of which life's puzzles and difficulties form but a part. Even as we are told that prophets and kings had desired to see the truths which we see—see so dimly—and did not see them, so we too must be content to wait for fuller light. ‘What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’ Mean-time we must repose with Job, in the sense of God's love and goodness, as in that of his power and wisdom—of the love and goodness of a God, Who has been manifested to us, as He was not to Job, in Christ Jesus His Son. Let me add one word more; it shall be my last.

LECTURE
XII.
—♦♦—
Chap. xlii.

I would cherish the hope that among those who, strangers for the most part to each other and to myself, have been drawn together through the winter that is now passing, by a sympathetic interest in a common study, there may be not a few who will carry away with them lessons that extend beyond the immediate aim of these weekly meetings. I trust that one and another will have derived from the study of this striking book something beyond its own impressive and enduring lessons. May they have gained here a deepened sense of the treasures yet untouched, of the mine of instruction of help and of delight yet unexplored, which are contained in that manifold collection of sacred writings which we call the Bible. May they realise, more than ever heretofore, how priceless are those treasures, how unexhausted is that mine. May they feel how true it is that in age after age, in our own age not least of all, the Spirit of God can still speak to the human Spirit in and through those ancient pages.

March 13, 1886.

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